

SEVERAL  
DISCOURSES  
UPON THE  
EXISTENCE  
AND  
ATTRIBUTES  
OF  
G O D.

By that late Eminent Minister of Christ,  
**Mr. STEPHEN CHARNOCKE, B. D.**  
And sometimes Fellow of *New-Colledge* in *Oxon.*



L O N D O N,  
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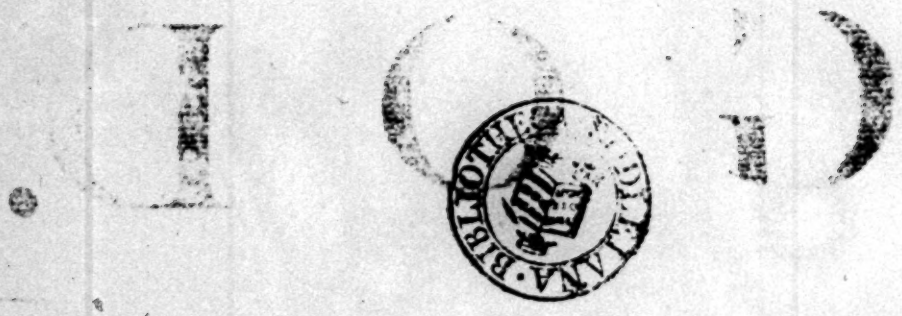
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TO THE  
R E A D E R.



HIS long since promised, and greatly expected Volume of the Reverend Authour upon the Divine Attributes, being Transcribed out of his own Manuscripts, by the unwearied diligence of those worthy Persons that undertook it, is now at last come to thy hands: Doubt not but thy Reading will pay for thy waiting, and thy satisfaction make full compensation for thy patience. In the Epistle before his Treatise of Providence, it was intimated that his following Discourses would not be inferior to that, and we are perswaded that ere thou hast perused one half of this, thou wilt acknowledge that it was modestly spoken. Enough, assure thy self, thou wilt find here for thy entertainment and delight, as well as profit: The sublimeness, variety, and rareness of the Truths here handled, together with the elegance of the Composure, neatness of the Style, and whatever is wont to make any Book desirable, will all concur in the recommendation of this. What so high and noble a Subject, what so fit for his Meditations or thine, as the highest and noblest Being, and those transcendently glorious Perfections wherewith he is clothed? A meer Contemplation of the Divine Excellencies may afford much pleasure to any man that loves to exercise his Reason, and is addicted to speculation: But what incomparable sweetness then will holy Souls find, in viewing and considering those Perfections now, which they are more fully to behold hereafter; and seeing what manner of God, how wise and powerful, how great, and good, and holy is he, in whom the Covenant interests them, and in the enjoyment of whom their happiness consists? If rich men delight to sum up their vast Revenues, to read over their Rentals, look upon their Hoords; if they bless themselves in their great Wealth, or, to use the Prophets words, *Jer. 9. 23. glory in their Riches*, well may Believers rejoyce and *glory in their knowing the Lord*.

Mr. J. Wic-  
chens.  
Mr. Astor.



## To the Reader.

vers. 24. and please themselves in seeing how rich they are in having an immensely full, and All-sufficient God for their Inheritance. Alas, how little do most men know of that Deity they profess to serve, and own, not as their Sovereign only, but their Portion? To such this Author might say, as *Paul to the Athenians, Whom you ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.* These Treatises, Reader, will inform thee who he is whom thou callest *thine*, present thee with a view of thy chief good, and make thee value thy self a thousand times more upon thy interest in God, than upon all external Accomplishments, and worldly Possessions. Who but delights to hear well of one whom he loves? God is thy *Love* if thou be a Believer, and then it cannot but fill thee with delight and ravishment to hear so much spoken in his Praise. *David desired to dwell in the House of the Lord*, that he might there behold his beauty; How much of that beauty (if thou art but capable of seeing it) mayest thou behold in this Volume, which was our Author's main business, for about three years before he died, to display before his hearers? True indeed, the Lord's Glory, as shining forth before his heavenly Courtiers above, is unapproachable by mortal Men; but what of it is visible in his Works, Creation, Providence, Redemption, falls under the cognizance of his Inferiour Subjects here; and this is in a great measure presented to view in these Discourses, and so much we may well say, as may (by the help of Grace) be effectual to raise thy Admiration, attract thy Love, provoke thy Desires, and enable thee to make some guess at what is yet unseen; and why not likewise to clear thy Eyes, and prepare them for future sight, as well as turn them away from the contemptible Vanities of this present Life? Whatever is glorious in this World, yet (as the Apostle  
1 Cor. 3. 10. in another case) *hath no glory by reason of the glory that excels*: This excellent Glory is the Subject of this Book, to which all Created Beauty is but meer shadow and duskynefs. If thy Eyes be well fixed on this, they will not be easily drawn to wander after other Objects: If thy heart be taken with God, it will be mortified to every thing that is not God.

But thou hast in this Book, not only an excellent Subject in the general, but great variety of Matter, for the employment of thy Understanding, as well as enlivening thy Affections, and that too such as thou wilt not readily find elsewhere; many excellent things which are out of the roade of ordinary Preachers and Writers, and which may be grateful to the Curious, no less than satisfactory to the Wise and Judicious. It is not therefore a Book to be play'd with, or slept over, but read with the most intent and serious Mind; for though it afford much pleasure for the Phancy, yet much more work for the heart, and hath indeed enough in it to busie all the Faculties. The Dress is compt and decent, yet not garish nor Theatrical; the Rhe-



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*To the Reader.*

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Rhetorick masculine and vigorous, such as became a Pulpit, and was never borrowed from the Stage; the Expressions full, clear, apt, and such as are best suited to the weightiness and spirituality of the Truths here delivered. 'Tis plain, he was no empty Preacher, but was more for sense than sound, filled up his words with matter, and chose rather to inform his Hearers Minds, than to claw any itching Ears. Yet we will not say but some little things, a Word, or a Phrase now and then he may have, which no doubt, had he lived to Transcribe his own Sermons, he would have altered. If in some lesser matters he differ from thee, it is but in such as Godly and Learned Men do frequently, and may without breach of Charity differ in among themselves; in some things he may differ from us too, and it may be we from each other; and where are there any two Persons, who have in all, especially the more disputable Points of Religion, exactly the same Sentiments, at least express themselves altogether in the same terms? But this we must say, that though he treat of many of the most abstruse and mysterious Doctrines of Christianity, which are the Subjects of great Debates and Controversies in the World, yet we find no one material thing in which he may justly be called Heterodox (unless old Heresies be of late grown Orthodox, and his differing from them must make him faulty) but generally delivers (as in his \* former Pieces) what is most consonant to the Faith of *This*, and other the best Reformed Churches. He was not indeed for that Modern Divinity which is so much in vogue with some, who would be counted the only sound Divines; having *tasted the old*, he did not *desire the new*, but said, *the old is better*. Some Errours, especially the *Socinian*, he sets himself industriously against, and cuts the very Sinews of them, yet, sometimes, almost without naming them.

\* *Treatise of  
Providence  
and of  
Thoughts.*

In the Doctrinal Part of several of his Discourses thou wilt find the depth of *Polemical* Divinity, and in his Inferences from thence the sweetness of *Practical*; some things which may exercise the profoundest Scholar, and others which may instruct and edify the weakest Christian; nothing is more nervous than his Reasonings, and nothing more affecting than his Applications. Though he make great use of *Schoolmen*, yet they are certainly more beholden to him, than he to them; he adopts their Notions, but he refines them too, and improves them, and reforms them from the barbarousness in which they were expressed, and dresseth them up in his own Language (so far as the nature of the matter will permit, and more clear terms are to be found) and so makes them intelligible to *Vulgar Capacities*, which in their original rudeness were obscure and strange, even to *Learned Heads*.



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*To the Reader.*

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In a word, he handles the great Truths of the Gospel, with that Perspicuity, Gravity, and Majesty which best becomes the Oracles of God; and we have reason to believe, that no judicious and unbiaſſed Reader, but will acknowledge this to be incomparably the beſt practical Treatiſe the World ever ſaw in *Engliſh* upon this Subject. What Dr. *Jackson* did (to whom our Authour gave all due reſpect) was more brief, and in another way. Dr. *Preſton* did worthily upon the *Attributes* in his day, but his Diſcourſes likewiſe are more ſuccinct, when this Authours are more full and large. But whatever were the mind of God in it, it was not his Will, that either of theſe two ſhould live to finiſh what he had begun, both being taken away when Preaching upon this Subject. Happy Souls! whoſe laſt breath was ſpent in ſo noble a Work, \* *praiſing God while they had any being.*

\* *Pſal.* 146.2

His Method is much the ſame in moſt of theſe Diſcourſes, both in the Doctrinal and Practical Part, which will make the whole more plain, and facile to ordinary Readers. He rarely makes Objections, and yet frequently answers them, by implying them in thoſe Propoſitions he lays down for the clearing up the Truths he aſſerts. His Dexterity is admirable in the Applicatory Work, where he not only brings down the higheſt Doctrines to the loweſt Capacities, but collects great varietie of proper, pertinent, uſeful, and yet (many times) unthought of Inferences; and that from thoſe Truths, which however they afford much matter for Inquiſition and Speculation, yet might ſeem (unleſs to the moſt intelligent and judicious Chriſtians) to have a more remote influence upon Practice. He is not like ſome *School Writers*, who attenuate and rarefie the Matter they Diſcourſe of to a degree bordering upon Annihilation; at leaſt beat it ſo thin, that a puff of breath may blow it away; ſpin their Thred ſo fine, that the Cloth, when made up, proves uſeleſs; Solidity dwindles into Niceties, and what we thought we had got by their Aſſertions, we loſe by their Diſtinctions. But if our Authour have ſome Subtilties and ſuperfine Notions in his Argumentations, yet he condeneſeth them again, and consolidates them into ſubſtantial and profitable Corolaries in his Applications: And in them his main buſineſs is, as to diſcipline a prophane World for its neglect of God, and contempt of him in his moſt adorable and ſhining perfections; ſo likewiſe to ſhew how the *Divine Attributes* are not only infinitely excellent in themſelves, but a grand Foundation for all true *Divine Worſhip*, and ſhould be the great Motives to provoke men to the exerciſe of Faith, and Love, and Fear, and Humility, and all that holy Obedience they are called to by the Goſpel: And this without peradventure is the great



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*To the Reader.*

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great end of all those rich Discoveries God hath in his Word made of himself to us. And, *Reader*, if these elaborate Discourses of this holy Man, through the Lord's blessing, become a means of promoting Holiness in thee, and stir thee up to love and live to the God of *his* <sup>*Psal. 109.1.*</sup> praise, we are well assured that his end in Preaching them is answered, and so is ours in publishing them.

Thine in the Lord,

*EDW. VEEL.*

*R I. ADAMS.*

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The









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# DISCOURSE

UPON THE

## Existence of God.

Psalm 14. 1.

*The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God; they are corrupt, they have done abominable Works: there is none that doth good.*

**T**HIS Psalm is a description of the deplorable corruption by Nature of every Son of Adam, since the withering of that Common Root. Some restrain it to the Gentiles, as a Wilderness full of Bryars and Thorns, as not concerning the Jews, the Garden of God, planted by his Grace, and watered by the Dew of Heaven. But the Apostle, the best Interpreter, rectifies this in extending it by name to Jews, as well as Gentiles, Rom. 3. 9. [*We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.*] And v. 10. 11, 12. Cites part of his Psalm and other passages of Scripture for the further evidence of it, concluding by Jews and Gentiles, every person in the world naturally in this State of Corruption.

The Psalmist first declares the Corruption of the faculties of the Soul, *the fool hath said in his heart*. Secondly, the streams issuing from thence, *they are corrupt*, &c. the first in Atheistical principles, the other in unworthy practices; and lays all the Evil, Tyranny, Lust and Persecutions by men, (as if the World were only for their sake) upon the neglects of God, and the Atheism cherished in their hearts.

*The fool*, a term in Scripture signifying a wicked man, used also by the Heathen Philosophers to signify a vicious person, נבל as coming from נבל signifies the extinction of life in Men, Animals and Plants, so the word נבל is taken\*, a plant that hath lost all that juyce that made it lovely and useful. So a fool is one that hath lost his Wisdom, and right notion of God and Divine things which were communicated to man by creation; one dead in sin, yet one not so much void of rational faculties as of Grace in those faculties, not one that wants reason, but abuses his reason: In Scripture the word signifies foolish. ||

\* Said in his heart, that is, he thinks, or he doubts, or he wishes. The thoughts of the heart are in the nature of words to God, though not to men. Tis used in the like case of the Atheistical person, Psal. 10. 11. 13. *He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten*, he hath said in his heart *thou wilt not require it*. He doth not form a Syllogism, as Calvin speaks, that there is no God: he dares not openly publish it, though he dares secretly think it. He can not rase out the thoughts of a Deity, though he endeavors to blot those Characters of God in his Soul. He hath some doubts whither there be a God or no: He wishes there were not any, and sometimes hopes there is none at all. He could not so ascertain him self by convincing arguments to produce to the World, but he tampered with his own heart to bring it to that perswasion, and smothered in himself those notices of a Deity; which is so plain against the light of nature, that such a man may well be called a fool for it.

\* Isa. 40. 7.  
נבל ציון the  
flower fadeth  
Isa. 28. 1.

|| מאיס נבל  
and רשעים  
put together  
Deut. 32. 6.  
Oh foolish people  
and unwise.



אין  
אלהים  
No God  
\* Mult.

There is no God\* ] לֹא שׁוּלְמָנָא *non potestas Domini, Chalda.* Tis not Jehovah, which name signifies the Essence of God, as the Prime and Supreme being; But *Eloahia*, which name signifies the Providence of God, God as a Rector and Judge. Not that He denyes the Existence of a Supreme Being, that Created the World, but his regarding the Creatures, his Government of the world, and consequently his reward of the Righteous or Punishments of the Wicked.

\* Cocceius.

\* There is a threefold denial of God, 1. *Quoad existentiam*; this is absolute Atheism, 2. *Quoad Providentiam*, or his inspection into, or care of the things of the World, bounding him in the Heavens, 3. *Quoad naturam*, in regard of one or other of the perfections due to his nature.

Not owning him  
as the Egyptians  
called,  
θεοῦ ἐνδοξαστον  
\* Eugubini in doc.

Of the denial of the Providence of God most understand this \* not excluding the absolute Atheist, as *Diagoras* is reported to be, nor the Sceptical Atheist, as *Protagoras*, who doubted whether there were a God. Those that deny the Providence of God, do in effect deny the being of God; for they strip him of that Wisdom, Goodness, Tenderness, Mercy, Justice, Righteousness, which are the Glory of the Deity. And that principle, of a greedy desire to be uncontroll'd in their Lusts, which induceth men to a denial of Providence, that thereby they might stifle those seeds of fear which infect and embitter their sinful pleasures, may as well lead them to deny that there is any such being as a God.

That at one blow, their fears may be dash'd all in peices and dissolved by the removal of the Foundation: As men who desire liberty to commit works of darkness, would not have the lights in the House dimm'd, but extinguish'd. What men say against Providence, because they would have no check in their Lusts, they may say in their hearts against the existence of God upon the same account; little difference between the dissenting from the one and disowning the other.

*They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doth good.*

He speaks of the Atheist in the singular, *the fool*; of the corruption issuing in the life in the plural; intimating that though some few may choak in their hearts the sentiments of God and his Providence, and positively deny them, yet there is something of a secret Atheism in all which is the fountain of the evil practices in their lives, not an utter disowning of the Being of a God, but a denial or doubting of some of the rights of his nature: \* When men deny the God of purity they must needs be polluted in Soul and Body and grow brutish in their actions: When the sense of Religion is shaken off, all kind of wickedness is eagerly rush'd into, whereby they become as loathsome to God as putrified carcases are to men: \* Not one or two evil actions is the product of such a principle, but the whole scene of a mans life is corrupted and becomes execrable.

\* Atheism absolute is not in all mens judgments, but practical is in all mens actions. The Apostle in the Romans applying the later part of it to all mankind, but not the former. As the word translated corrupt signifies.

No man is exempted from some spice of Atheism by the depravation of his nature, which the Psalmist intimates, *there is none that doth good*: Though there are indelible convictions of the being of a God that they cannot absolutely deny it; yet there are some Atheistical burlings in the hearts of men, which Evidence themselves in their actions: As the Apostle, *Tit. 1. 16. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him.* Evil works are a dust stirred up by an Atheistical breath. He that habituates himself in some sordid lust, can scarcely be said seriously and firmly to believe that there is a God in being, and the Apostle doth not say that they know God, but *they profess to know him*: True knowledge and profession of knowledge are distinct. It intimates also to us, the unreasonableness of *Atheism* in the Consequence, when men shut their eyes against the beams of so clear a sun, God revengeth himself upon them for their impiety, by leaving them to their own wills, lets them fall into the deepest sink and dregs of iniquity; and since they doubt of him in their hearts, suffers them above others to deny him in their works, this the Apostle discourseth at large \*.

\* Rom. 1. 24.

The Text then is a description of mans Corruption.

1. *Of his mind. The fool hath said in his heart.* No better title than that of a fool is afforded to the Atheist.

2. *Of the other faculties.* 1. *In sins of Commission*, express'd by the loathsomeness [corrupt, abominable] 2. *In sins of Omission* [there is none that doth good] he lays down the Corruption of the mind as the cause, the corruption of the other faculties as the effect.



I. *'Tis a great Folly to deny or doubt of the Existence or Being of God. Or, An Atheist is a great Fool.*

II. *Practical Atheism is natural to man in his corrupt State.* 'Tis against Nature as constituted by God, but Natural, as Nature is depraved by Man: The absolute disowning of the Being of a God is not natural to men, but the contrary is natural; but an inconsideration of God, or misrepresentation of his Nature, is natural to Man as corrupt.

III. *A secret Atheism, or a partial Atheism is the Spring of all the wicked Practices in the world:* The disorders of the Life spring from the ill dispositions of the Heart.

For the first, *every Atheist is a Grand Fool.* If he were not a Fool, he would not imagine a thing so contrary to the stream of the Universal Reason of the world, contrary to the rational Dictates of his own Soul, and contrary to the Testimony of every Creature, and Link in the Chain of Creation: If he were not a Fool, he would not strip himself of Humanity, and degrade himself lower than the most despicable Brute.

'Tis a Folly, for the God be so Inaccessible, that we cannot know him perfectly, yet he is so much in the light, that we cannot be totally ignorant of him: As he cannot be comprehended in his Essence, he cannot be unknown in his Existence, 'tis as easie by Reason to understand that he is, as it is difficult to know what he is.

The Demonstrations Reason furnisheth us with for the Existence of God, will be Evidences of the Atheist's Folly. One would think there were little need of spending time in evidencing this Truth, since in the Principle of it, it seems to be so universally own'd, and at the first proposal and demand, gains the assent of most men.

But I. *Doth not the growth of Atheism among us render this Necessary?* may it not justly be suspected, that the swarms of Atheists are more numerous in our times, than History Records to have been in any age, when men will not only say it in their hearts, but publish it with their lips, and boast that they have shaken of those Shackles which bind other mens Consciences? Doth not the bare-fac'd Debauchery of men evidence such a settled Sentiment, or at least a careless Belief of the truth, which lies at the root and sprouts up in such venomous branches in the World? Can mens hearts be free from that Principle wherewith their Practices are so openly depraved? 'Tis true, the light of Nature shines too vigorously for the Power of Man totally to put it out; yet loathsome Actions impair and weaken the actual thoughts and considerations of a Deity, and are like Mists that darken the light of the Sun, though they cannot extinguish it: their Consciences as a Candlestick, must hold it, though their unrighteousness obscure it, *Rom. 1. 18.* [*Who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness.*] The engraved Characters of the Law of Nature remain, though they clawb them with their muddy Lusts to make them illegible: So that since the inconsideration of a Deity is the cause of all the wickedness and extravagancies of men; and as *Austin saith*, the Proposition is always true, the Fool hath laid in his heart, &c. and more evidently true in this age than any, it will not be unnecessary to discourse of the Demonstrations of this first Principle.

The Apostles spent little time in urging this Truth, it was taken for granted all over the world, and they were generally devout in the *Worship* of those Idols, they thought to be Gods: That age run from one God to many, and our age is running from one God to none at all.

2. *The Existence of God, is the Foundation of all Religion.* The whole Building totters if the Foundation be out of Course: If we have not deliberate and right Notions of it, we shall perform no Worship, no Service, yeild no affection to him. If there be not a God, 'tis impossible there can be one; for Eternity is Essential to the notion of a God; so all Religion would be vain, and unreasonable to pay Homage to that which is not in being, nor can ever be. We must *first believe that he is*, and that he is what he declares himself to be, before we can seek him, adore him, and devote our Affections to him: \* We cannot pay God a due and regular Homage, unless we understand him in his Perfections, what he is; and we can pay him no Homage at all, unless we believe that he is. \* *Heb. 11.5.*

3. *'Tis fit, we should know why we believe*, that our Belief of a God, may appear to be upon undeniable Evidence, and that we may give a better reason for his Existence, than that we have heard our Parents and Teachers tell us so, and our



acquaintance think so. 'Tis as much as to say there is no God, when we know not why we believe there is, and would not consider the Arguments for his Existence.

4. *It is necessary to depress that secret Atheism which is in the heart of every man by nature.* Though every visible object which offers it self to our sense, presents a Deity to our minds, and exhorts us to subscribe to the truth of it, yet there is a Root of *Atheism* springing up sometimes in wavering thoughts, and foolish imaginations, inordinate actions, and secret wishes. Certain it is, that every man that doth not love God, denies God; now can he that disaffects him, and hath a slavish fear of him, wish his Existence, and say to his own heart with any cheerfulness, there is a God, and make it his chief care to persuade himself of it? he would persuade himself there is no God, and stifle the seeds of it in his Reason and Conscience, that he might have the greatest liberty to intertain the allurements of the Flesh.

'Tis necessary to Excite men to daily and actual considerations of God and his nature, which would be a bar to much of that wickedness which overflows in the lives of men.

\* Coccei Sum.  
Theol. c. 2. § 1.

5. *Nor is it unuseful to those who effectually believe and love him;* for those who have had a converse with God, and felt his powerful influences in the secrets of their hearts, to take a prospect of those satisfactory accounts which reason gives of that God they adore and love; to see every Creature justify them in their owning of him, and affections to him: Indeed the Evidences of a God striking upon the Conscience of those who resolve to cleave to sin as their cheifest darling, will dash their pleasures with unwelcome mixtures.

I shall further premise this.

*That the folly of Atheism is evidenced by the light of Reason.* Men that will not listen to Scripture, as having no counterpart of it in their Souls, cannot easily deny natural Reason, which riseth up on all sides for the justification of this Truth: There is a natural as well as a revealed Knowledge, and the Book of the Creatures is legible in declaring the Being of a God, as well as the Scriptures are in declaring the Nature of a God; there are outward objects in the World, and common Principles in the Conscience, whence it may be inferr'd,

For, 1. *God in regard of his Existence is not only the discovery of Faith, but of Reason.* God hath revealed not only his Being, but some sparks of his eternal Power and Godhead in his Works, as well as in his Word. *Rom. 1. 19, 20. God hath shewed it unto them, how?* \* in his works; by the things that are made, 'tis a discovery to our Reason, as shining in the Creatures; and an object of our Faith as breaking out upon us in the Scriptures: 'tis an Article of our Faith, and an Article of our Reason. Faith supposeth natural knowledge, as Grace supposeth nature. Faith indeed is properly of things above Reason, purely depending upon Revelation: What can be demonstrated by natural light, is not so properly the object of Faith; though in regard of the addition of a certainty by Revelation it is so.

\* Aquin.

\* Heb. 11. 6.

The belief that God is, which the Apostle speaks of, \* is not so much of the bare Existence of God, as what *God is* in Relation to them that seek to him, viz. a Rewarder. The Apostle speaks of the Faith of *Abel*, the Faith of *Enoch*, such a Faith that pleases God: But the Faith of *Abel* testified in his sacrifice, and the Faith of *Enoch* testified in his walking with God, was not simply a Faith of the Existence of God. *Cain* in the time of *Abel*, other men in the World in the time of *Enoch*, believed this as well as they: But it was a Faith joyned with the Worship of God, and desires to please him in the way of his own appointment; so that they believed that God was such as he had declared himself to be in his promise to *Adam*, such an one as would be as good as his word, and bruise the Serpents head: He that seeks to God according to the mind of God, must believe that he is such a God that will pardon sin, and justify a seeker of him; that he is a God of that ability and will, to justify a sinner in that way he hath appointed for the clearing the Holiness of his Nature, and vindicating the Honour of his Law violated by man.

No man can seek God or love God, unless he believe him to be *thus*, and he cannot seek God without a discovery of his own mind how he would be sought.

For



For it is not a seeking God in any way of mans Invention, that renders him capable of this desired fruit of a Reward: He that beleives God as a Rewarder, must beleive the promise of God concerning the *Messiah*. Men under the Conscience of sin, cannot tell without a divine discovery, whither God will reward, or how he will reward the seekers of him; and therefore cannot act towards him as an object of Faith. Would any man seek God merely because he is, or love him because he is, if he did not know that he should be acceptable to him? The bare Existence of a thing is not the ground of affection to it, but those qualities of it and our interest in it, which render it amiable and delightful. How can men whose Consciences fly in their faces, seek God or love him, without this knowledge that he is a Rewarder? Nature doth not shew any way to a sinner, how to reconcile Gods provoked Justice with his Tenderness. The Faith the Apostle speaks of here, is a Faith that eyes the reward as an encouragement, and the Will of God as the Rule of its acting, he doth not speak simply of the Existence of God.

I have spoken the more of this place, because the *Socinians* \* use this to decry any natural knowledge of God, and that the Existence of God is only to be known by Revelation, so that by that reason any one that lived without the Scripture hath no ground to beleive the being of a God.

\* Voet. The 1  
natural. cap. 3.  
§ 1. p. 22.

[The Scripture ascribes a knowledge of God to all Nations in the world, *Rom. 1. 19.* not only a faculty of knowing, if they had arguments and demonstrations; as an ignorant man in any art hath a faculty to know; but it ascribes an actual knowledge *ver. 19. manifest in them, ver. 21. They knew God*, not they might know him, they knew him when they did not care for knowing him: the notices of God are as intelligible to us by reason, as any object in the world is visible, he is written in every Letter.

2. *We are often in the Scripture sent to take a prospect of the Creatures for a discovery of God.* The Apostles drew arguments from the *Topicks* of nature, when they discoursed with those that owned the Scripture, *Rom. 1. 19.* As well as when they treated with those that were ignorant of it; as *Acts 14. 16, 17.* And among the Philosophers of *Athens, Acts 17. 27, 29.* such arguments the Holy Ghost in the Apostles thought sufficient to convince men of the Existence, Unity, Spirituality and Patience of God. \* Such arguments had not been used by them and the Prophets from the visible things in the world to silence the *Gentiles* with whom they dealt, had not this Truth, and much more about God, been demonstrable by natural Reason: they knew well enough that probable arguments would not satisfy peircing and inquisitive minds.

\* Voet. Teet.  
natural. cap. 3.  
§ 1. p. 22.

In *Pauls* account, the Testimony of the Creatures was without contradiction; God himself justifies this way of proceeding by his own example, and remits *Job* to the consideration of the Creatures, to spell out something of his Divine Perfections. \* And this is so convincing an argument of the Existence of God, that God never vouchsafed any Miracle, or put forth any act of Omnipotency, besides what was evident in the Creatures for the satisfaction of the Curiosity of any Atheist, or the evincing of his Being, as he hath done for the Evidencing those Truths which were not written in the book of nature, or for the restoring a decayed worship, or the protection or deliverance of his people: Those Miracles in publishing the Gospel, indeed did demonstrate the existence of some supream Power; but they were not seals designedly affixt for that, but for the confirmation of that truth, which was above the ken of purblind Reason, and purely the birth of Divine Revelation: Yet what proves the Truth of any Spiritual Doctrine, proves also in that act the Existence of the Divine Author of it: The Revelation always implies a Revealer, and that which manifests it to be a Revelation, manifests also the supream Revealer of it. By the same light the Sun manifests other things to us, it also manifests it self. But what Miracles could rationally be supposed to work upon an Atheist, who is not drawn to a sense of the Truth proclaimed aloud by so many wonders of the Creation?

\* Job. 28. 39.  
40. &c. *It is but one truth in Philosophy and Divinity, That which is false in one, cannot be true in another; Truth in what appearance so ever doth never contradict it self.*

Let us now proceed to the demonstration of the Atheists Folly.

It is a Folly to deny or doubt of a Sovereign Being, incomprehensible in his Nature, infinite in his Essence and Perfections, independent in his Operations, who hath given Being to the whole frame of sensible and intelligible Creatures, and governs



them according to their several natures, by an unconceivable Wisdom ; who fills the Heavens with the Glory of his Majesty, and the Earth with the influences of his Goodness.

'Tis a Folly inexcusable, to renounce in this case all appeal to universal consent, and the joynt assurances of the Creatures.

Reason 1. *'Tis a Folly to deny or doubt of that which hath been the acknowledged Sentiment of all Nations, in all places and ages.* There is no Nation but hath owned some kind of Religion, and therefore no Nation but hath consented in the notion of a supream Creator and Governor.

1. *This hath been universal.*

2. *It hath been constant and uninterrupted.*

3. *Natural and innate.*

First, I. *It hath been universally assented to by the Judgments and practices of all Nations in the World.*

1. *No Nation hath been exempt from it.* All Histories of former and latter Ages have not produced any one Nation but fell under the force of this Truth. Though they have differed in their Religions, they have agreed in this Truth ; here both *Heathen, Turk, Jew and Christian*, center without any Contention. No quarrel was ever commenced upon this score ; though about other opinions Wars have been sharp and Enmities Irreconcilable ; The notion of the *Existence of a Deity* was the same in all, *Indians* as well as *Britains* ; *Americans* as well as *Jews*.

It hath not been an opinion peculiar to this or that people, to this or that Sect of Philosophers ; but hath been as universal as the reason whereby men are differenc'd from other Creatures, so that some have rather defin'd man by *animal religiosum*, then *animal rationale*. 'Tis so twisted with Reason that a man cannot be accounted rational, unless he own an object of Religion : Therefore he that underitands not this, renounceth his Humanity when he renounceth a Divinity.

No instance can be given of any one people in the World that disclaimed it. It hath been owned by the Wise and ignorant, by the learned and stupid, by those who had no other guide but the dimmest light of Nature, as well as by those whose Candles were snuff'd by a more polite Education, and that without any solemn debate and contention : Though some Philosophers have been known to change their opinions in the concerns of Nature, yet none can be proved to have absolutely changed their opinion concerning the Being of a God : One died for asserting one God, none in the former Ages upon record hath died for asserting no God. Go to the utmost bounds of *America*, you may find people without some broken peices of the Law of nature, but not without this signature and stamp upon them, though they wanted commerce with other Nation ; except as Savage as themselves, in whom the light of nature was as it were sunk into the Socket, who are but one remove from Brutes, who cloath not their bodies, cover not their shame, yet were they as soon known to own a God, as they were known to be a people : they were possessed with the Notion of a Supream Being, the Author of the World, had an object of Religious adoration, put up Prayers to the Deity they owned for the good things they wanted, and the diverting the evils they feared : no people so untamed where absolute perfect Atheism hath gained a footing.

Not one Nation of the World known in the time of the *Romans* that were without their Ceremonies, whereby they signified their devotion to a Deity. They had their places of Worship, where they made their Vows, presented their Prayers, offered their Sacrifices, and implored the Assistance of what they thought to be a God. And in their distresses run immediatly, without any deliberation, to their Gods, so that the notion of a Deity was as inward and settled in them as their own Souls, and indeed runs in the blood of mankind : the distempers of the understanding, cannot utterly deface it, you shall scarce find the most distracted Bedlam in his raving fits to deny a God, though he may Blaspheme and fancy himself one.

2. *Nor doth the Idolatry and multiplicity of Gods in the World weaken, but confirm this universal consent.* Whatsoever unworthy conceits men have had of God in all Nations, or whatsoever degrading representations they have made of him, yet they



they all concur in this, that there is a Supream Power to be ador'd. Tho one People worshipp'd the Sun, others the Fire, and the *Egyptians*, gods out of their Rivers, Gardens, and Fields; yet the Notion of a Deity existent, who created and governed the World, and conferred daily benefits upon them, was maintained by all, tho apply'd to the Stars, and in part to those sordid Creatures. All the *Demons* of the World establish this Truth, and fall down before it. Had not the Nations owned the Being of a God, they had never offered Incense to an Idol: Had there not been a deep impresson of the *Existence of a Deity*, they had never exalted Creatures below themselves to the honour of Altars: Men could not so easily have been deceived by forged Deities, if they had not had a Notion of a real one. Their fondness to set up others in the place of God, evidenced a natural knowledg that there was one, who had a right to be worshipp'd. If there were not this sentiment of a Deity no man would ever have made an Image of a peice of Wood, worshipp'd it, pray'd to it, and said *deliver me for thou art my God* \*. They apply'd a general Notion to a perticular Image. The difference is in the manner, and immediate object of worship, not in the formal ground of worship. The worship sprung from a true Principal, though it was not apply'd to a right object: While they were rational Creatures, they could not deface the Notion; yet while they were corrupt Creatures it was not difficult to apply themselves to a wrong object from a true principle. A blind man knows he hath a way to go as well as one of the clearest sight, but because of his blindness he may miss the way and stumble into a Ditch. No man would be impos'd upon to take a *Bristol* Stone instead of a Diamond, if he did not know that there were such things as Diamonds in the World: nor any man spread forth his hands to an Idol, if he were altogether without the sense of a Deity. Whether it be a false or a true God men apply to, yet in both, the natural sentiment of a God is evidenc'd; all their mistakes were grafts inserted in this Stock, since they would multiply gods rather than deny a Deity.

\* Isa. 44. 17.

\* How should such a general submission be enter'd into the by all the world, so as to adore things of a base alloy, if the force of Religion were not such, that in any fashion a man would seek the satisfaction of his natural insinct to some object of worship? This great diversity confirms this consent, to be a good argument, for it evidenceth it not to be a Cheat, combination or conspiracy to deceive, or a mutual intelligence, but every one finds it in his climate, yea in himself. People would never have given the Title of a God to men or Brutes, had there not been a pre-existing and unquestioned perswasion, that there was such a Being, how else should the Notion of a God come into their minds, the Notion that there is a God must be more ancient.

\* Charvon de la  
Sagele Liv. 1.  
Chap. 7. p. 43-44.

\* Gassend. *Phil.*  
§ 1. lib. 4. Ca. 2.  
p. 291.

3. *Whatever disputes there have been in the World, this of the existence of God was never the subject of contention.* All other things have been questioned. What Jarrings were there among Philosophers about natural things, into how many parties were they split, with what animosities did they maintain their several judgments? but we hear of no solemn Controversies about the Existence of a Supream Being: this never met with any considerable contradiction: no Nation, that hath put other things to question, would ever suffer this to be disparaged, so much as by a publick doubt. \* We find among the Heathen contentions about the Nature of God and the number of gods; some asserted an innumerable multitude of gods, some affirmed him to be subject to birth and death, some affirmed the intire World was God; others fancied him to be a circle of a bright Fire; others that he was a Spirit diffused through the whole World: Yet they unanimously concurr'd in this, as the judgment of Universal Reason, that there was such a sovereign Being: And those that were sceptical in every thing else, and asserted that the greatest certainty was that there was nothing certain, profess a certainty in this. The question was not whether there was a *First Cause*, but why it was. \* 'Tis much the same thing, as the disputes about the Nature and matter of the Heavens, the Sun and Planets, tho there be great diversity of Judgments, yet all agree that there are Heavens, Sun, Planets; so all the Contentions among men about the Nature of God, weaken not, but rather confirm, that there is a God, since there was never a publick formal debate about his Existence. Those that have been ready to pull out one anothers

\* *Amviant des*  
*Religion* p. 50.

\* Gassend. *Phil.*  
§ 1. lib. 4. Ca. 2.  
p. 291.

eyes



eyes for their dissent from their judgments, sharply censured one anothers sentiments, envied the births of one anothers wits, alwayes shooke hands with an unanimous consent in this: never censured one another for being of this persuasion, never called it into question; what was never controverted among men professing Christianity, but acknowledged by all, though contending about other things, has reason to be judged a certain Truth belonging to the Christian Religion; so what was never subjected to any Controversy, but acknowledged by the whole World, hath reason to be embraced as a Truth without any doubt.

Gassend. *Phys.*  
§ 1. lib. 4. cap.  
7. p. 282.

\* Gassend. *ibid.*  
p. 290.

4. *This Universal Consent is not prejudiced by some few Dissenters.* History doth not reckon *twenty perfect Atheists* in all Ages in the compass of the whole World: and we have not the name of any one absolute Atheist upon Record in Scripture: yet it is questioned, whether any of them, noted in History with that infamous name, were down-right deniers of the Existence of God, but rather because they disparaged the Deities commonly worshipped by the Nations where they lived, as being of a clearer reason to discern, that those qualities, vulgarly attributed to their gods, as lust and luxury, wantonness and quarrels, were unworthy of the nature of a God. But suppose they were really what they are termed to be, what are they to the multitude of men, that have sprung out of the loyns of *Adam*? not so much as one grain of ashes is to all that were ever turned into that form by any fires in your Chimnies. And many more were not sufficient to weigh down the contrary consent of the whole World, and bear down an universal impression. Should the Laws of a Country, agreed universally to, by the whole Body of the People be accounted vain, because a *hundred men* of those millions disapprove of them, when not their reason, but their folly and base interest, persuades them to dislike them and dispute against them? What if some men be blind, shall any conclude from thence that eyes are not natural to men? shall we say that the notion of the *Existence of God* is not natural to men, because a very small number have been of a contrary opinion? shall a man in a dungeon, that never saw the Sun, deny that there is a Sun, because one or two blind men tell him there is none, when thousands assure him there is? Why should then the exceptions of a few, not one to millions, discredit that which is voted certainly true by the joynt consent of the World? Add this too, that if those that are reported to be Atheists had had any considerable reason to step aside from the common persuasion of the whole world, 'tis a wonder it met not with entertainment by great numbers of those, who, by reason of their notorious wickedness, and inward disquiets, might reasonably be thought to wish in their hearts that there were no God. 'Tis strange if there were any reason on their side, that in so long a space of time, as hath run out from the Creation of the World, there could not be engaged a considerable number to frame a Society for the profession of it. It hath died with the Person that started it, and vanish'd as soon as it appeared.

[Cicero.]

To conclude this, is it not folly for any man to deny or doubt of the being of a God, to dissent from all mankind, and stand in contradiction to humane Nature? What is the *general dictate of Nature is a certain Truth*. 'Tis impossible, that Nature can naturally and universally lie. And therefore those that ascribe all to Nature, and set it in the Place of God, contradict themselves, if they give not credit to it in that which it universally affirms. || A general consent of all Nations is to be esteemed as a Law of Nature. Nature cannot plant in the minds of all men an assent to a falsity, for then the Laws of Nature would be destructive to the reason and minds of men. How is it possible, that a falsity should be a persuasion spread through all Nations, engraven upon the minds of all men, men of the most towering, and men of the most creeping understanding; that they should consent to it in all places, and in those places, where the Nations have not had any known commerce with the rest of the known World? A Consent not settled by any Law of Man to constrain People to a belief of it: And indeed 'tis impossible, that any Law of man can constrain the Belief of the mind. Would not he deservedly be accounted a fool, that should deny that to be gold, which hath been tryed and examined by a great number of knowing Goldsmiths, and hath past the test of all their touch-stones? what excess of folly would it be for him to deny it to be true gold, if it had been tryed by all that had skill in that metal in all Nations in the World?

Secondly,



Secondly, 2. *It hath been a constant and uninterrupted consent.* It hath been as Ancient as the first age of the World; no man is able to mention any time, from the beginning of the World, wherein this Notion hath not been universally owned; it is as old as man-kind, and hath run along with the course of the Sun, nor can the date be fixed lower than that.

1. First, *In all the changes of the World, this hath been maintained.* In the over-turnings of the Government of States, the alteration of Modes of Worship this hath stood unshaken. The reasons upon which it was founded were in all Revolutions of time accounted satisfactory and convincing, nor could absolute Atheism in the changes of any Laws ever gain the favour of any one Body of people to be established by a Law. When the Honour of the Heathen Idols was laid in the dust, this suffered no impair. The being of one God was more vigorously owned, when the unreasonableness of multiplicity of Gods was manifest; and grew taller by the detection of counterfeits. When other parts of the Law of nature have been violated by some Nations, this hath maintained its standing. The long series of Ages hath been so far from blotting it out, that it hath more strongly confirmed it, and maketh further progress in the confirmation of it. Time which hath eaten out the strength of other things and blasted meer inventions, hath not been able to consume this. The discovery of all other Impostures, never made this by any society of men to be suspected as one. It will not be easy to name any Imposture that hath walked perpetually in the world without being discovered, and whipped out by some Nation or other. Fallacies have never been so universally and constantly owned without publick controul and question. And since the world hath detected many errors of the former age, and learning been increased, this hath been so far from being dimm'd, that it hath shone out clearer with the increase of natural knowledge, and received fresh and more vigorous confirmations.

2. *The fears and anxieties in the Consciences of men, have given men sufficient occasion to root it out, had it been possible for them to do it.* If the Notion of the Existence of God, had been possible to have been dash'd out of the minds of men, they would have done it rather than have suffered so many troubles in their Souls upon the Commission of sin; since there did not want wickedness and wit in so many corrupt ages to have attempted it and prospered in it, had it been possible. How comes it therefore to pass that such a multitude of profligate persons that have been in the world since the fall of man, should not have rooted out this principle, and disposited the minds of men of that which gave birth to their tormenting fears? How is it possible that all should agree together in a thing which created fear, and an obligation against the Interest of the Flesh, if it had been free for men to discharge themselves of it? No man, as far as corrupt nature bears sway in him, is willing to live controul'd.

The first Man, would rather be a God himself than under one: \* Why should men continue this Notion in them, which shackled them in their vile inclinations, if it had been in their power utterly to deface it? If it were an Imposture, how comes it to pass that all the wicked ages of the world could never discover that to be a cheat, which kept them in continual alarms? Men wanted not will to shake off such apprehensions; As Adam, so all his Posterity are desirous to hide themselves from God upon the Commission of sin, \* and by the same reason they would hide God from their Souls. What is the reason they could never attain their will, and their wish by all their endeavours? Could they possibly have satisfied themselves that there were no God, they had discarded their fears, the disturbers of the repose of their lives, and been unbridled in their pleasures. The wickedness of the world would never have preserved that which was a perpetual molestation to it, had it been possible to be rased out. \* Gen. 3. 9.

But since men under the turmoils and lashes of their own Consciences could never bring their hearts to a settled dissent from this Truth, it evidenceth, that as it took its birth at the beginning of the world, it cannot expire, no not in the ashes of it, nor in any thing but the reduction of the Soul to that nothing from whence it sprung. This conception is so perpetual, that the nature of the Soul must be dissolved before it be rooted out, nor can it be extinct whiles the Soul endures.

3. Let it be considered also by us that own the Scripture, *that the Devil deems it impossible*



*impossible to root out this sentiment.* It seems to be so perpetually fixed, that the Devil did not think fit to tempt man to the denial of the Existence of a Deity, but perswaded him to believe he might ascend to that Dignity and become a God himself, Gen. 3.1. *Hath God said?* and he there owns him ver. 5. *Ye shall become as Gods.* He owns God in the question he asks the Woman, and perswades our first Parents to be Gods themselves. And in all stories both Ancient and Modern, the Devil was never able to Tincture mens minds, with a professed denial of the Deity, which would have opened a door to a world of more wickedness than hath been acted, and took away the bar to the breaking out of that evil, which is naturally in the hearts of men, to the greater prejudice of human societies. He wanted not malice to rase out all the Notions of God, but power: He knew it was impossible to effect it, and therefore in vain to attempt it. He set up himself in several places of the ignorant world as a God, but never was able to overthrow the opinion of the being of a God: The impressions of a Deity were so strong as not to be struck out by the malice and power of Hell.

What a folly is it then in any to contradict or doubt of this Truth, which all the periods of time have not been able to wear out; which all the Wars and Quarrels of men with their own Consciences have not been able to destroy; which Ignorance and Debauchery, its two greatest Enemies, cannot weaken; which all the falsehoods and errors, which have reigned in one or other part of the world, have not been able to banish; which lives in the consents of men in spite of all their wishes to the contrary, and hath grown stronger and Shone clearer by the improvements of natural reason?

3. *Natural and innate*; which pleads strongly for the perpetuity of it. Tis natural tho some think it not a Principle writ in the heart of man; \* tis so natural that every man is born with a restless instinct to be of some kind of Religion or other, which implies some object of Religion. The impression of a Deity is as common as reason, and of the same age with reason. \* Tis a Relique of knowledg after the fall of Adam, like fire under ashes, which sparkles as soon as ever the heap of ashes is opened. A notion sealed up in the Soul of every man; \* else how could those people who were unknown to one another, separate by Seas and Mounts, differing in various customs and manner of living, had no mutual intelligence one with another, light upon this as a common Sentiment, if they had not been guided by one uniforme reason in all their minds, by one nature common to them all: though their Clymates be different, their tempers and constitutions various, their imaginations in somethings as distant from one another as Heaven is from Earth, the Ceremonies of their Religion not all of the same kind; Yet wherever you find human nature, you find this settled perswasion. So that the Notion of a God seems to be twisted with the nature of man, and is the first natural branch of Common reason, or upon either the first inspection of a man into himself and his own state and constitution, or upon the first sight of any external visible object. Nature within man, and nature without man agree upon the first meeting together to form this Sentiment, that there is a God. Tis as natural as any thing we call a Common Principle. One thing which is called a Common Principle and natural is, that the whole is greater than the parts. If this be not born with us, yet the exercise of reason essential to man settles it as a certain Maxim; upon the dividing any thing into several parts, he finds every part less than when they were altogether. By the same exercise of reason, we cannot cast our eyes upon any thing in the world, or exercise our understandings upon our selves, but we must presently imagine, there was some cause of those things, some cause of my self and my own being; so that this Truth is as natural to man as any thing he can call most natural or a Common Principle.

It must be confest by all, that there is a Law of nature writ upon the hearts of men, which will direct them to commendable actions, if they will attend to the writing in their own Consciences. This Law cannot be considered without the notice of a Law-giver. For tis but a natural and obvious conclusion, that some superior hand engrafted those principles in man, since he finds something in him twitching him upon the pursuit of uncomely actions, though his heart be mightily enclined to them; man knows he never planted this principle of Reluctancy in his own Soul; he can never be the cause of that, which he cannot be friends with. If he were the cause of it, why doth he not rid himself of it? No man would endure a thing that doth frequently molest and disquiet him if he could cast it. Tis therefore sown in man by some hand more powerful than man, which riseth so high and is rooted so strong, that all the force

that

\* Pink. Eph. 6.  
pag. 10. 11.

\* King. in  
Jonah pag. 16.

\* Amyrant des  
Religions pag. 6.  
c. 8. 9.



that man can use cannot pull it up. If therefore this principle be natural in man, and the Law of Nature be natural, the Notion of a Law-giver must be as natural, as the Notion of a Printer or that there is a Printer is obvious upon the sight of a stamp impress: After this the multitude of effects in the World step in to strengthen this beam of natural light, and the direct Conclusion from thence is, that that power which made those outward objects, implanted this inward principle: This is sown in us, born with us and sprouts up with our growth, or as one saith 'tis like Letters carved upon the bark of a young plant which grows up together with us and the longer it grows the Letters are more legible.

This is the ground of this universal consent, and why it may well be termed natural.

This will more evidently appear to be natural because,

1. *This consent could not be by meer Tradition.*
2. *Nor by any mutual intelligence of Governors to keep people in awe,* which are two things the Atheist pleads, the first hath no strong foundation, and that other is as absurd and foolish as it is wicked and abominable.
3. *Nor was it first introduced it.*

1. *It could not be by meer Tradition.* Many things indeed are entertained by posterity which their Ancestors delivered to them, and that out of a common reverence to their Fore-Fathers, and an opinion that they had a better prospect of things than the increase of the corruption of succeeding ages would permit them to have.

But if this be a Tradition handed from our Ancestors, they also must receive it from theirs, we must then ascend to the first man, we cannot else escape a confounding ourselves with running into infinite; was it then the only Tradition he left to them, is it not probable he acquainted them with other things in conjunction with this, the nature of God, the way to Worship him, the manner of the Worlds Existence, his own state? We may reasonably suppose him to have a good stock of knowledge, what is become of it? It cannot be supposed, that the first man should acquaint his posterity with an object of Worship, and leave them ignorant of a Mode of Worship and of the end of Worship, we find in Scripture his immediate posterity did the first in Sacrifices, and without doubt they were not ignorant of the other: how come men to be so uncertain in all other things, and so confident of this, if it were only a Tradition? how did debates and irreconcilable questions start up concerning other things, and this remain untouch'd, but by a small number? whatsoever Tradition the first Man left besides this, is lost, and no way recoverable, but by the Revelation God hath made in his Word.

How comes it to pass this of a God is longer liv'd, than all the rest which we may suppose Man left to his immediate descendants? How come men to retain the one, and forget the other? What was the reason this surviv'd the ruin of the rest, and surmounted the uncertainties into which the other sunk? Was it likely it should be handed down alone without other attendants on it at first? Why did it not expire among the *Americans*, who have lost the account of their own descent, and the Stock from whence they sprung, and cannot reckon above eight hundred or a thousand years at most? Why was not the manner of the worship of a God transmitted as well as that of his Existence? How came men to dissent in their Opinions concerning his Nature, whether he was corporeal or incorporeal, finite or infinite, omnipresent or limited? Why were not men as negligent to transmit this of his Existence as that of his Nature? No reason can be rendred for the security of this above the other, but that there is so clear a tincture of a Deity upon the minds of men, such traces and shadows of him in the creatures, such indelible instincts within, and invincible arguments without to keep up this universal consent. The Characters are so deep that they cannot possibly be ras'd out, which would have been one time or other, in one Nation or other, had it depended only upon Tradition, since one Age shakes off frequently the Sentiments of the former.

I cannot think of above one which may be called a Tradition, which indeed was kept up among all Nations, *viz.* Sacrifices, which could not be natural but instituted: What ground could they have in Nature, to imagin that the blood of Beasts could expiate and wash off the guilt and stains of a rational Creature? Yet they



had in all places ( but among the *Jews*, and some of them only ) lost the knowledge of the reason and end of the Institution, which the *Scripture* acquaints us was to typifie and signifie the Redemption by the Promised Seed. This Tradition hath been superannuated and laid aside in most parts of the World, while this Notion of the Existence of a God hath stood firm.

But suppose it were a Tradition, was it likely to be a meer intention and figment of the first Man? Had there been no reason for it, this Posterity would soon have found out the weakness of its Foundation: What advantage had it been to him to transmit so great a falshood to kindle the fears or raise the hopes of his Posterity, if there were no God? It cannot be supposed he should be so void of that natural affection, men in all ages bear to their Descendents, as so grossly to deceive them, and be so contrary to the simplicity and plainness which appears in all things nearest their Original.

2. Neither was it by any mutual Intelligence of Governours among themselves to keep people in subjection to them. If it were a political design at first, it seems it met with the general nature of Mankind very ready to give it entertainment.

1. It is unaccountable how this should come to pass. It must be either by a joynt Assembly of them, or a mutual Correspondence. If by an Assembly, who were the persons? let the name of any one be mentioned, When was the time? Where was the place of this appearance? By what Authority did they meet together? Who made the first motion, and first started this great Principle of Policy? By what means could they assemble from such distant parts of the World? humane Histories are utterly silent in it, And the *Scripture*, the antientest History gives an account of the attempt of *Babel*, but not a word of any design of this nature.

What mutual Correspondence could such have, whose Interests are for the most part different, and their designs contrary to one another? How could they who were divided by such vast Seas have this mutual Converse? How could those who were different in their Customs and Minners, agree so unanimously together in one thing to gull the People? If there had been such a Correspondence between the Governours of all Nations, what is the reason some Nations should be unknown to the world till of late times? How could the business be so secretly managed, as not to take Vent, and Issue in a discovery to the World? Can reason suppose so many in a joynt Conspiracy, and no mans Conscience in his life under sharp Afflictions, or on his death bed, when Conscience is most awakened, constrain him to reveal openly the Cheat that beguil'd the World? How came they to be so unanimous in this Notion, and to differ in their Rites almost in every Country? why could they not agree in one Mode of Worship throughout all the World, as well as in this universal Notion? If there were not a mutual intelligence, it can not be conceived how in every Nation such a state-Engineer should rise up with the same trick to keep people in aw. What is the reason we cannot find any Law in any one Nation to constrain men to the belief of the Existence of a God, since politick Stratagems have been often fortified by Laws? Besides, such men make use of Principles received to effect their Contrivances, and are not so impolitick as to build designs upon Principles that have no Foundation in nature: Some Heathen Law-givers have pretended a converse with their Gods to make their Laws be received by the people with a greater veneration, and fix with stronger obligation the observance and perpetuity of them; but this was not the introducing of a new Principle, but the supposition of an old received Notion, that there was a God, and an application of that Principle to their present designe. The pretence had been vain had not the notion of a God been ingrafted: Politicians are so little possessed with a Reverence of God, that the first Mighty one in the *Scripture*, (which may reasonably gain with the Atheist the credit of the Antientest History in the World) is represented without any fear of God. \* An Invader and Oppressor of his Neighbors, and reputed the Introducer of a new Worship, and being the first that built Cities after the flood, (as *Cain* was the first Builder of them before the flood,) built also Idolatry with them. And erected a new Worship, and was so far from strengthening that Notion the people had of God, that he endeavoured to corrupt it; The first Idolatry in common Histories being noted to proceed from that part of the World; the Antientest Idol being at *Babylon*, and supposed to be first invented by this Person: Whence by the way per-

\* Gen. 10. 9.  
Nimrod was a  
mighty hunter  
before the Lord.



haps *Rome* is in the *Revelations* called *Babylon*, with respect to that similitude of their Saint-Worship, to the Idolatry first set up in that place. \* Tis evident *Politicians* have often changed the Worship of a Nation, but it is not upon record that the first thoughts of an object of Worship ever entred into the minds of people by any trick of theirs.

\* Or if we understand it as some think, that he defended his innovations under a pretext of too preserving Religion, it shews us that there was a notion of an object of Religion before, since no Religion can be without an object of Worship.

But to return to the present Argument, the Being of a God is owned by some Nations, that have scarce any form of policy among them. Tis as wonderful how any wit should hit upon such an Invention, as it is absurd to ascribe it to any humane device, if there were not prevailing Arguments to constrain the consent. Besides, how is it possible they should deceive themselves? What is the reason the greatest *Politicians* have their fears of a Deity upon their unjust practices, as well as other men, they intended to befooled? How many of them have had forlorn Consciences upon a Death-bed, upon the consideration of a God to answer an account to in another world? Is it credible they should be frightened by that wherewith they knew they beguiled others? No man satisfying his pleasures would impose such a deceipt upon himself or render and make himself more miserable than the Creatures he hath dominion over.

2. *It is unaccountable how it should indure so long a time.* That this Policy should be so fortunate as to gain ground in the Consciences of men, and exercise an Empire over them, and meet with such an universal success. If the Notion of a God were a State-Engine and introduced by some Politick Grandees for the ease of Government, and preserving people with more facility in order, how comes it to pass the first broachers of it were never upon record? there is scarce a false opinion vented in the World, but may as a stream be traced to the first head and fountain. The Inventors of particular forms of worship are known, and the reasons why they prescribed them known; but what Grandee was the Author of this? who can pitch a time and person that sprang up this Notion? If any be so insolent as to impose a cheat, he can hardly be supposed to be so successful as to deceive the whole world for many ages: Impostures pass not free through the whole world without Examination and discovery; Falsities have not been universally and constantly owned without controul and question. If a cheat imposeth upon some Towns and Countries, he will be found out by the more peircing enquiries of other places; and it is not easy to name any Imposture that hath walked so long in its disguise in the World, without being unmasked and whipped out by some Nation or other: If this had been a meer trick, there would have been as much craft in some to discern it as there was in others to contrive it. No Man can be imagined so wise in a Kingdom, but others may be found as wise as himself: And it is not conceivable, that so many clear sighted men in all ages should be ignorant of it, and not endeavour to free the world from so great a falsity. \* It cannot be found that a trick of State should always beguile men of the most piercing insights, as well as the most credulous: That a few crafty men should befooled all the wisemen in the world; and the world lie in a belief of it and never like to be freed from it. What is the reason the succeeding *Politicians* never knew this Stratagem, since their Maxims are usually handed to their Successors?

\* Fortherby a Theomastix, p. 84.

And there is not a Richieu but leaves his Axioms to a Maze-rine.

This perswasion of the Existence of God, owes not it self to any Imposture or subtlety of Men: If it had not been agreeable to common Nature and Reason, it could not so long have born sway. The imposed yoke would have been cast off by Multitudes; Men would not have charged themselves with that which was attended with consequences displeasing to the Flesh, and hindred them from a full swing of their rebellious Passions; such a shackle would have mouldred of it self, or been broke by the extravagances humane nature is inclin'd unto: The wickedness of men without question, hath prompted them to endeavour to unmask it, if it were a Cosenage, but could never yet be so successful as to free the world from a perswasion, or their own Consciences from the tincture of the Existence of a Deity. It must be therefore of an ancients Date than the Craft of States-men, and descend into the world with the first appearance of humane nature. Time, which hath rectified many Errors, improves this Notion, makes it shock down its roots deeper and spread its branches larger.

It must be a natural Truth that shines clear by the detection of those Errors that have befooled the World, and the wit of Man is never able to name any humane

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Author that first insinuated it into the beliefs of men.

3. *Nor was it Fear first introduced it.* Fear is the Consequent of Wickedness. A Man was not created with any inherent sin, so he was not created with any terrifying fears, the one had been against the Holiness of the Creator, the other against his Goodness: Fear did not make this Opinion, but the Opinion of the Being of a Deity was the cause of this Fear, after his sense of angering the Deity by his Wickedness. The Object of Fear is before the Act of Fear; there could not be an Act of Fear exercised about the Deity, till it was believed to be existent, and not only so, but Offended: For God as existent only, is not the Object of Fear or Love; 'tis not the Existence of a thing that excites any of those Affections, but the Relation a thing bears to us in particular. God is good and so the object of Love as well as just and thereby the object of Fear. He was as much called *Love*, \* and *Mens*, or *Mind* in regard of his Goodness and Understanding, by the Heathens, as much as by any other Name. Neither of those names were proper to insinuate Fear; neither was Fear the first Principle that made the Heathens worship a God; they offered Sacrifices out of Gratitude to some, as well as to others out of Fear; the fear of Evils in the world, and the hopes of Relief and Assistance from their Gods, and not a terrifying Fear of God, was the principal Spring of their Worship: When Calamities from the hands of Men, or Judgments by the influences of Heaven were upon them, they implored that which they thought a Deity; It was not their Fear of him, but a Hope in his Goodness and Persuasion of Remedy from him, for the averting those Evils that rendered them Adorers of a God: If they had not had preexistent Notions of his Being and Goodness, they would never have made Addresses to him, or so frequently sought to that they only apprehended as a terrifying Object: \* When you hear men calling upon God in a time of affrighting Thunder, you cannot imagin that the fear of Thunder did first introduce the Notion of a God, but implies that it was before apprehended by them, or stamp'd upon them, though their Fear doth at present actuate that Belief, and engage them in a present Exercise of Piety: and whereas the Scripture saith *the fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom*, or of all Religion; \* 'tis not understood of a distracted and terrifying Fear, but a reverential Fear of him, because of his holiness, or a worship of him, a submission to him, and sincere seeking of him.

\* Gallend. *Phil.*  
*sch. l. 1. c. 2.*  
*p. 251. 252.*

\* *Phil. 1. 16.*  
*Phil. 1. 1. 1.*

Well then is it not a folly for an Atheist to deny that which is the reason and common Sentiment of the whole world, to strip himself of humanity, run counter to his own Conscience, prefer a private before a universal Judgment, give the lie to his own nature and reason, assert things impossible to be proved, nay impossible to be acted, Forge irrationalities for the support of his fancy against the common persuasion of the world and against himself and so much of God as is manifest in him and every man \*?

\* Rom. 1. 19.

Jupiter est  
quodcumque  
videt, &c.

II. *It is a folly to deny that which all Creatures or all things in the World manifest.* Let us view this in Scripture since we acknowledge it, and after consider the arguments from natural reason.

The Apostle resolves it, Rom. 1. 19, 20. *The invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse:* They know or might know, by the things that were made, the Eternity and power of God; their sense might take a Circuit about every object, and their minds collect the being and something of the perfections of the Deity: The first discourse of the mind upon the sight of a delicate piece of workman-ship, is the Conclusion of the being of an Artificer and the admiration of his skill and industry. The Apostle doth not say, the invisible things of God are *believed*, or they have an opinion of them, but they are *seen* and *clearly seen*: They are like Cristal glasses which give a clear representation of the Existence of a Deity, like that Mirror reported to be in a Temple in *Arcadia*, which represented to the Spectator, not his own face, but the Image of that Deity which he Worshipped.

The whole world is like a looking-glass, which whole and entire represents the Image of God, and every broken piece of it, every little shred of a Creature doth the like, not only the great ones, *Elephants* and the *Leviathan*, but *Ants*, *Flies*, *Worms*, whose bodies rather than names we know: The greater *Cattle* and the *Creeping things* Gen. 1. 24. Not naming there any intermediate Creature, to direct us to view him in

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the smaller Letters, as well as the greater Characters of the World. His name is *Glorious* and his Attributes are excellent *in all the Earth*, \* in every Creature, as the glory of the Sun is in every beam and smaller flash; he is seen in every Insect, in every Spire of grass: The voice of the Creator is in the most contemptible Creature:

\* The *Apostle* adds that they are so clearly seen, that men are inexcusable if they have not some knowledge of God by them; if they might not certainly know them, they might have some excuse: So that his *Existence* is not only probably but demonstratively proved from the things of the world.

Especially the Heavens declare him, which God *stretches out like a Curtain*, \* or as some render the word, a *Skin*, whereby is signified, that Heaven is as an open book, which was Anciently made of the skins of beasts, that by the knowledge of them we may be taught the knowledge of God. Where Scripture was not revealed the world served for a witness of a God; what ever arguments the Scripture uses to prove it, are drawn from nature, (though indeed it doth not so much prove as suppose the Existence of a God) but what Arguments it uses are from the Creatures, and particularly the Heavens, which are the publick Preachers of this Doctrine: The breath of God sounds to all the World through those Organ-pipes. His Being is visible in their Existence, his Wisdom in their frame, his Power in their motion, his Goodness in their usefulness: \* They have a voice, and their voice is as intelligible as any common Language. And those are so plain Heralds of a Deity, that the Heathen mistook them for Deities, and gave them a particular adoration which was due to that God they declared. The first Idolatry seems to be of those Heavenly bodies, which began probably in the time of *Nimrod*. In *Jobs* time it is certain they admired the Glory of the *Sun*, and the brightness of the *Moon*, not without *kissing their hands*, a sign of Adoration.\* Tis evident a man may as well doubt whither there be a Sun when he sees his beams gilding the Earth, as doubt whither there be a God when he sees his works spread in the World.

The things in the World declare the Existence of a God.

1. In their Production, 2. Harmony, 3. Preservation, 4. Answering their several ends.

First, 1. In their production. The declaration of the Existence of God was the chief end for which they were Created, that the Notion of a Supreme and Independent Eternal Being, might easier incur into the active understanding of man from the objects of sense dispersed in every corner of the World, that he might pay a homage and devotion to the Lord of all, *Isa.* 40. 12, 13, 18, 19. &c. *Have you not understood from the foundation of the Earth, tis he that sits upon the Circle of the Heaven*, &c. How could this great heap be brought into being, unless a God had framed it? Every plant, every Atome, as well as every Star, at the first meeting whispers this in our Ears, *I have a Creator, I am witness to a Deity*; who ever saw Statues or Pictures but presently thinks of a Statuary and Limner? Who beholds Garments, Ships or Houses, but understands there was a Weaver, a Carpenter, an Architect? \* Who can cast his eyes about the world, but must think of that power that formed it, and that the goodness which appears in the formation of it hath a perfect Residence in some Being? [those things that are good must flow from something perfectly good: that which is chief in any kind is the cause of all of that kind. Fire which is most hot is the cause of all things which are hot. There is some being therefore which is the cause of all that Perfection, which is in the Creature; and this is God. *Aquin.* 1 qu. 2. Artic. 3.] All things that are, demonstrate something from whence they are. All things have a contracted perfection and what they have is Communicated to them. Perfections are parcelled out among several Creatures. Any thing that is imperfect cannot exist of it self. We are led therefore by them to consider a fountain which bubbles up in all perfection; a hand which distributes those several degrees of Being and Perfection to what we see; we see that which is imperfect, our minds conclude something perfect to exist before it; our eye sees the streams, but our understanding riseth to the head: as the eye sees the shadow, but the understanding informs us whither it be the shadow of a man, or of a beast.

God hath given us Sense to behold the objects in the World, and Understanding to reason his *Existence* from them; the understanding cannot conceive a thing to have made it self; that is against all reason. \* As they are made they speak out a Maker; and can-

\* *Psal.* 8. 1.

\* *Bares* in *Aquin. Par.* 2. Qu. 2. Artic. 2. p. 78. Col. 2.

\* *Psal.* 104. 2.

\* *For their* voice goeth to the end of the Earth, *Psal.* 19. 1, 2.

\* *Job.* 31. 26, 27.

\* *Philo.* ex *Petav. Theolo. Dog. Tom.* 1. li. 1. cap. 1, p. 4. somewhat changed.

\* *Rom.* 1. 20.

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not be a trick of chance, since they are made with such an immense Wisdom, that is too big for the grasp of all humane understanding. Those that doubt whether the Existence of God be an implanted Principle, yet agree that the effects in the world lead to a supream and universal cause: And that if we have not the knowledge of it rooted in our Natures, yet we have it by discourse, since by all Masters of reason a *Processus in Infinitum* must be accounted impossible in subordinate causes.

This will appear in several things.

\* Gen. 1.  
By Faith we understand that  
the worlds were framed by the  
word of God &c.  
\* Heb. 11. 3.

First, I. *The World and every Creature had a beginning.* The Scripture Ascertains this to us; \* *David* who was not the first man gives the praise to God of his being *curiously wrought*, &c. Psal. 139. 14. 15. God gave being to Men and Plants and Beasts, before they gave being to one another. He gives being to them now as the Fountain of all being, though the several Modes of being are from the several natures of second causes.

Tis true indeed we are ascertained that they were made by the true God, that they were made by his word, that they were made of nothing, and not only this lower world wherein we live, but according to the *Jewish* division the world of *Men*, the the world of *Stars* and the world of *Spirits*, and *Souls*: We do not waver in it or doubt of it as the Heathen did in their disputes, we know they are the workmanship of the true God, of that God we adore, not of false Gods: *By his Word*, without any instrument or engine, as in earthly Structures; *of things which do not appear*, without any preexistent matter, as all Artificial works of men are framed.

Yet the proof of the beginning of the world is affirmed with good reason; and if it had a beginning, it had also some higher cause than it self: Every effect hath a cause.

\* Daille 20.  
Serm. Pla. 102.  
26. p. 13. 14.

\* *The World was not Eternal or from Eternity.* The matter of the world cannot be Eternal: Matter cannot subsist without form, nor put on any form without the action of some cause, this cause must be in being before it acted; that which is not cannot act. The cause of the world must necessarily exist before any matter was endued with any form; that therefore cannot be Eternal before which another did subsist; if it were from Eternity it would not be subject to mutation: If the whole was from Eternity why not also the parts, what makes the changes so visible then, if Eternity would exempt it from mutability?

\* Daille ut  
Supra.

1. *Time cannot be infinite, and therefore the World not Eternal;* \* All motion hath its beginning, if it were otherwise, we must say the number of Heavenly revolutions of days and nights, which are past to this instant, is actually infinite, which cannot be in nature: If it were so, it must needs be granted, that a part is equal to the whole; because infinite being equal to infinite, the number of days past in all Ages to the beginning of one year being Infinite (as they would be, supposing the World had no beginning) would by consequence be equal to the number of days, which shall pass to the end of the next; whereas that number of days past is indeed but a part, and so a part would be equal to the whole.

\* Petar. Theo.  
Dogmat. tom. 1.  
lib. 1. cap. 2.  
pag. 15.

2. *Generations of Men, Animals and Plants could not be from Eternity.* \* If any Man say the world was from Eternity, then there must be propagations of living Creatures in the same manner as are at this day: For without this the World could not consist; what we see now done must have been perpetually done, if it be done by a necessity of nature: But we see nothing now that doth arise but by a mutual propagation from another: If the world were Eternal therefore, it must be so in all Eternity: take any particular species, suppose a man, if men were from Eternity, then there were perpetual generations, some were born into the World and some died: Now the natural condition of generation is, that a man doth not generate a man, nor a Sheep a Lamb, as soon as ever it self is brought into the World, but get strength and vigour by degrees, and must arrive to a certain stated age before they can produce the like, for whilst any thing is little and below the due age, it cannot increase its kind; Men therefore and other Creatures did propagate their kind, by the same Law, not as soon as ever they were born, but in the interval of some time, and Children grew up by degrees in the Mothers Womb till they were fit to be brought forth: If this be so, then there could not be an Eternal succession of propagating: For there is no Eternal continuation of time: Time is always to be conceived as having one part before another: But that perpetuity of Nativities is always



always after some time, wherein it could not be for the weakness of age : If no man then can conceive a propagation from Eternity, there must be then a beginning of Generation in time, and consequently the Creatures were made in time.

[If the World were Eternal, it must have been in the same posture as it is now, in a state of Generation and Corruption ; And so Corruption must have been as Eternal as Generation, and then things that do generate and corrupt must have Eternally been and Eternally not have been: There must be some first way to set Generation on work. ] We must lose our selves in our conceptions ; we cannot conceive a Father before a Child, as well as we cannot conceive a Child before a Father : And reason is quite bewildered, and cannot return into a right way of Conception till it Conceive one first of every kind : One first man, one first animal, one first Plant from whence others do proceed. The argument is unanswerable, and the wisest Atheist (if any Atheist can be called wise) cannot unlose the knot. We must come to something, that is first in every kind, and this first must have a cause, not of the same kind, but Infinite and Independent ; otherwise men run into unconceivable Labyrinths and contradictions.

\* Testimony in the words of one of our own Wollsey of Athel in pag. 21.

Man, the Noblest Creature upon Earth, hath a beginning. No Man in the World but was some years ago no man. If every man we see had a beginning, then the first Man had also a beginning, then the World had a beginning : For the Earth which was made for the use of man, had wanted that end for which it was made. We must pitch upon some one man that was unborn, that first man must either be Eternal, that cannot be, for he that hath no beginning hath no end ; or must spring out of the Earth as Plants and Trees do: That cannot be : Why should not the Earth produce men to this day, as it doth Plants and Trees ? He was therefore made ; and whatsoever is made hath some cause that made it, which is God. \* If the World were uncreated it were then immutable, but every Creature upon the Earth is in a continual flux, always changing : If things be mutable, they were Created, if Created they were made by some Author; whatsoever hath a beginning, must have a maker, if the World hath a beginning, there was then a time when it was not ; it must have some cause to produce it. That which makes is before that which is made, and this is God.

\* Petav. de Theo. p. 1.

\* Damasc.

Secondly, II. Which will appear further in this proposition, *No Creature can make it self*: The world could not make it self.

If every man had a beginning, every man then was once nothing ; he could not then make himself, because nothing cannot be the cause of something, Psa. 100. 3. *The Lord he is God he hath made us and not we our selves*, [ whatsoever begun in time, was not ; and when it was nothing, it had nothing, and could do nothing : And therefore could never give to it self nor to any other to be, or to be able to do : For then it gave what it had not, and did what it could not. \* Since reason must acknowledge a first of every kind, a first Man, &c. it must acknowledge him Created and made, not by himself: why have not other men since rise up by themselves ? not by Chance ; why hath not Chance produced the like in that long time the World hath stood ? If we never knew any thing give being to it self, how can we Imagine any thing ever could ? If the chiefest part of this lower World cannot, nor any part of it hath been known to give being to it self, then the whole cannot be supposed to give any being to it self : Man did not forme himself: His body is not from himself, it would then have the power of moving it self, but that is not able to live or act without the presence of the Soul: Whilst the Soul is present the body moves, when that is absent, the body lies as a senseless log, not having the least action or motion. His Soul could not form it self, can that which cannot form the least mote, the least grain of dust, form it self a nobler substance than any upon the Earth ?

\* Petav. Theo. Dog. tom. 1. lib. 1. cap. 2. pag. 14.

This will be evident to every Mans reason, if we consider

1. *Nothing can act before it be*. The first Man was not, and therefore could not make himself to be : For any thing to produce it self is to act ; if it acted before it was, it was then something and nothing at the same time ; it then had a being before it had a being ; it acted when it brought it self into being. How could it act without a being, without it was ? So that if it were the cause of it self, it must be before it self as well as after it self, it was before it was ; it was as a cause before it was as an effect. Action always supposeth a principle from whence it flows ; as nothing hath no Existence, so it

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hath no operation; there must be therefore something of real Existence to give a Being to those things that are, and every cause must be an effect of some other before it be a cause: To be and not be at the same time, is a manifest contradiction, which would be, if any thing made it self: That which makes is always before that which is made: Who will say the House is before the Carpenter, or the Picture before the Limbner? The world as a Creature, must be before it self as a Creature.

2. *That which doth not understand it self and order it self could not make it self.* If the first Man fully understood his own nature, the excellency of his own Soul, the manner of its operations, why was not that understanding conveyed to his posterity? Are not many of them found, who understand their own nature, almost as little as a Beast understands it self; or a Rose understands its own sweetness; or a Tulip its own Colours? The Scripture indeed gives us an account how this came about, viz. by the deplorable Rebellion of Man, whereby Death was brought upon them (a Spiritual Death, which includes ignorance as well as an inability to Spiritual action \*). Thus he fell from his Honour and became like the Beasts that perish, and not retaining God in his knowledge, retained not himself in his own knowledge.

\* Gen. 2. 17.  
Psal. 49. 8.

But what reply can an Atheist make to it, who acknowledges no higher cause than nature? If the Soul made it self, how comes it to be so muddied, so wanting in its knowledge of it self, and of other things? If the Soul made its own understanding whence did the defect arise? If some first principle was settled by the first man in himself, where was the stop that he did not implant all in his own mind, and consequently in the minds of all his descendents? Our Souls know little of themselves, little of the World, are every day upon new enquiries, have little satisfaction in themselves, meet with many an invincible rub in their way; and when they seem to come to some resolution in some cases, stagger again, and like a stone rould up to the top of the Hill, quickly find themselves again at the foot. How come they to be so purblind in Truth? So short of that which they Judge true goodness? How comes it to pass they cannot order their own Rebellious affections, and suffer the reins they have to hold over their affections to be taken out of their hands by the unruly fancy and flesh?

This no man that denies the being of a God, and the Revelation in Scripture can give an account of. Blessed be God that we have the Scripture, which gives us an account of those things, that all the wit of men could never inform us of; and that when they are discovered and known by Revelation, they appear not contrary to reason.

3. *If the first Man made himself, how came he to limit himself?* If he gave himself being, why did he not give himself all the perfections and Ornaments of being? Nothing that made it self could sit down contented with a little, but would have had as much power to give it self that which is less, as to give it self being, when it was nothing. The excellencies it wanted had not been more difficult to gain than the other which it possessed as belonging to its nature. If the first man had been independent upon another, and had his perfection from himself, he might have acquired that perfection he wanted as well as have bestowed upon himself that perfection he had; and then there would have been no bounds set to him. He would have been Omniscient and Immutable. He might have given himself what he would; if he had had the setting his own bounds, he would have set none at all; For what should restrain him? No man now wants Ambition to be what he is not; and if the first man had not been determined by another, but had given himself being, he would not have remained in that determinate being, no more than a Toad would remain a Toad, if it had power to make it self a man, and that power it would have had, if it had given it self a being. Whatsoever gives it self being, would give it self all degrees of being, and so would have no imperfection, because every imperfection, is a want of some degree of being. \* He that could give himself matter and life, might give himself every thing. The giving of life is an act of Omnipotence, and what is Omnipotent in one thing, may be in all. Besides, if the first man had made himself, he would have conveyed himself to all his posterity in the same manner, every man would have had all the perfections of the first man, as every Creature hath the perfections of the same kind, from whence it naturally Issues, all are desirous to communicate what they can to their posterity. Communicative goodness belongs to every nature. Every plant propagates its kind in the same perfection it hath it self; and

\* Therefore the Heathens call'd God 7d. 6. the only Being. Other things were not beings, because they had not all degrees of being.



and the nearer any thing comes to a rational nature, the greater affection it hath to that which descends from it; therefore this affection belongs to a rational nature much more. The first man therefore, if he had had power to give himself being, and consequently all perfection, he would have had as much power to convey it down to his posterity; no impediment could have stopt his way; then all Souls proceeding from that first man would have been equally intellectual. What should hinder them from inheriting the same perfections? whence should they have divers qualifications and differences in their understandings? No man then would have been subject to those weaknesses, doubtings, and unsatisfied desires of knowledge and perfection. But being all Souls are not alike, 'tis certain they depend upon some other cause for the communication of that excellency they have. If the perfections of Man be so contracted and kept within certain bounds, 'tis certain that they were not in his own power, and so were not from himself. Whatsoever hath a determinate being must be limited by some superior cause. There is therefore some superior power, that hath thus determined the Creature by set bounds and distinct measures, and hath assigned to every one its proper nature, that it should not be greater or less than it is; who hath said of every one as of the waves of the Sea, *\* Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further*; and this is God. Man could not have reserved any perfection from his Posterity. For since he doth propagate not by choice but nature, he could no more have kept back any perfection from them, than he could, as he pleased, have given any perfection belonging to his nature to them. \* Job 32. 11.

4. *That which hath power to give it self being, cannot want power to preserve that being.* Preservation is not more difficult than Creation. If the first Man made himself, why did he not preserve himself? He is not now among the living in the world. How came he to be so feeble as to sink into the Grave? Why did he not inspire himself with new heat and moisture, and fill his languishing limbs and declining body with new strength? Why did he not chase away Diseases and Death at the first approach? What Creature can find the dust of the first Man? All his posterity traverse the Stage and retire again; in a short space their Age departs, and is removed from them as a *Shepherds Tent*, and is cut off with pining Sickness. *\* The life of Man is as a wind, and like a cloud that is consumed and vanishes away, \* The Eye that sees him shall see him no more, he returns not to his house, neither doth his place know him any more*. The Scripture gives us the reason of this, and lays it upon the score of sin against his Creator; which no Man without revelation can give any satisfactory account of. \* Isa. 38. 12.  
\* Job 7. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Had the first Man made himself, he had been sufficient for himself, able to support himself without the assistance of any creature. He would not have needed animals and plants, and other helps to nourish and refresh him, nor Medicines to cure him. He could not be beholding to other things for his support, which he is certain he never made for himself. His own nature would have continued that vigour, which once he had conferred upon himself. He would not have needed the heat and light of the Sun; he would have wanted nothing sufficient for himself in himself; he needed not have sought without himself for his own preservation and comfort. What depends upon another is not of it self, and what depends upon things inferiour to it self is less of it self. Since nothing can subsist of it self, since we see those things upon which Man depends for his nourishment and subsistence, growing and decaying, starting into the world and retiring from it, as well as man himself; some preserving cause must be concluded, upon which all depends.

5. *If the first Man did produce himself, why did he not produce himself before?*

It hath been already proved, that he had a beginning, and could not be from Eternity. Why then did he not make himself before? Not because he would not. For having no being, he could have no will; he could neither be willing nor not willing. If he could not then, how could he afterwards? if it were in his own power he could have done it, he would have done it; if it were not in his own power, then it was in the power of some other cause, and that is God. How came he by that power to produce himself? If the power of producing himself were communicated by another, then Man could not be the cause of himself. That is the cause of it which communicated that power to it. But if the power of being was in and



from himself and in no other, nor communicated to him, man would always have been in act, and always have Existed; no hinderance can be conceived. For that which had the power of being in it self was invincible by any thing that should stand in the way of its own being.

We may conclude from hence, the excellency of the Scriptures that it is a Word not to be refused credit. It gives us the most rational account of things in the 1. and 2. of *Genesis*, which nothing in the world else is able to do.

*Thirdly*, III. Proposition, *no Creature could make the world.* No Creature can create another. If it creates of nothing, tis then Omnipotent and so not a Creature. If it makes something of matter unfit for that which is produced out of it, then the inquiry will be, who was the cause of the matter? and so we must arrive to some uncreated being, the cause of all. Whatsoever gives being to any other must be the highest being and must possess all the perfections of that which it gives being to. what visible Creature is there which possesses the perfections of the whole world? If therefore an invisible Creature made the world, the same enquiries will return whence that Creature had its being? for he could not make himself. If any Creature did Create the World, he must do it by the strength and vertue of another, which first gave him being; and this is God. For whatsoever hath its Existence and vertue of acting from another, is not God. If it hath its vertue from another tis then a second cause, and so supposeth a first cause. It must have some cause of it self, or be Eternally Existent. If Eternally Existent, tis not a second cause, but God; if not Eternally Existent, we must come to something at length which was the cause of it, or else be bewildred without being able to give an account of any thing. We must come at last to an Infinite Eternal Independent Being, that was the first cause of this Structure and Fabrick wherein we and all Creatures dwell. The Scripture proclaims this aloud, \* *I am the Lord and there is none else: I Form the light and I Create darkness.* Man the Noblest Creature cannot of himself make a man, the chiefest part of the World. If our Parents only without a Superior power made our Bodies or Souls, they would know the frame of them; as he that makes a Lock knows the Wards of it; he that makes any curious peice of Arras, knows how he setteth the various colours together, and how many threads went to each division in the Web; he that makes a Watch, having the Idea of the whole work in his mind, knows the motions of it and the reason of those motions. But both Parents and Children are equally ignorant of the nature of their Souls and Bodies, and of the reason of their motions. God only that had the Supream hand in forming us, in whose *Book all our members are written, which in continuance were fashioned*, knows what we all are ignorant of. If man hath in an ordinary course of generation his being chiefly from an higher cause than his Parents, the World then certainly had its being from some infinitely wise intelligent Being, which is God. If it were, as some fancy, made by an Assembly of Atomes, there must be some infinite intelligent cause that made them, some cause that separated them, some cause that mingled them together for the piling up so comely a structure as the world. Tis the most absurd thing to think they should meet together by hazard, and rank themselves in that order we see without a higher and a wise agent. So that no Creature could make the world. For supposing any Creature was formed before this visible world and might have a hand in disposing things, yet he must have a cause of himself, and must act by the virtue and strength of another; and this is God.

*Fourthly*, IV. Proposition. From hence it follows, *that there is a first cause of things which we call God.* There must be something supreme in the order of nature, something which is greater than all, which hath nothing beyond it or above it; otherwise we must run in infinitum. We see not a River but we conclude a Fountain; a Watch but we conclude an Artificer. As all number begins from unity, so all the multitude of things in the world begins from some unity, Oneness as the principle of it. Tis natural to arise from a view of those things, to the conception of a nature more perfect than any. As from heat mixed with cold, and light mixed with darkness, men conceive and arise in their understandings to an intense heat and a pure light: And from a Corporeal or bodily substance joyned with an incorporeal (as man is an earthly body, and a Spiritual Soul,) we ascend to a conception of a substance purely incorporeal

\* Isa. 45. 6. 7.  
Deut. 4. 35.

Psal. 139. 16.



corporeal and Spiritual. So from a multitude of things in the world, Reason leads us to one choice being above all. And since in all natures in the World, we still find a superior nature; the nature of one beast, above the nature of another; the nature of man above the nature of beasts; and some invisible nature, the worker of strange effects in the Air and Earth, which cannot be ascribed to any visible cause, we must suppose some nature above all those of unconceivable perfection.

\* Every *Sceptick*, one that doubts whither there be any thing real or no in the World, that counts every thing an appearance, must necessarily own a first cause. They cannot reasonably doubt, but that there is some first cause which makes the things appear so to them. They cannot be the cause of their own appearance. For as nothing can have a being from itself, so nothing can appear by it self and its own force. Nothing can be and not be, at the same time. But that which is not and yet seems to be; if it be the cause why it seems to be what it is not, it may be said to be and not to be. But certainly such persons must think themselves to exist. If they do not, they cannot think; and if they do exist, they must have some cause of that Existence. So that which way soever we turn our selves, we must in reason own a first cause of the World.

\* Coccei *sum.*  
*Theol. cap. 8.*  
§ 33. *etc.*

Well then might the *Psalmist* term an *Atheist* a fool, that disowns a God against his own reason. Without owning a God as the first cause of the world, no man can give any tolerable or satisfactory account of the world to his own reason.

And this first cause,

1. *Must necessarily exist.* \* Tis necessary that he by whom all things are, should be before all things and nothing before him. And if nothing be before him, he comes not from any other; and then he always was, and without beginning. He is from himself; not that he once was not but because he hath not his Existence from another, and therefore of necessity he did exist from all Eternity. Nothing can make it self, or bring it self into being; therefore there must be some being which hath no cause, that depends upon no other, never was produced by any other, but was what he is from Eternity, and cannot be otherwise; and is not what he is by will, but nature, necessarily existing, and always existing without any capacity or possibility ever not to be.

\* Petav. *Theol.*  
*Dog. Tom. 1.*  
*lib. 1. cap. 2.*  
pa. 10. 11.

2. *Must be infinitely perfect.* Since man knows he is an imperfect being, he must suppose the perfections he wants, are seated in some other being which hath limited him, and upon which he depends. Whatsoever we conceive of excellency or perfection, must be in God. For we can conceive no perfection but what God hath given us a power to conceive. And he that gave us a power to conceive a transcendent perfection above whatever we saw or heard of, hath much more in himself; else he could not give us such a conception.

Secondly, II. As the production of the world, so the harmony of all the parts of it declare the being and wisdom of a God. Without the acknowledging God the *Atheist* can give no account of those things. The multitude, elegancy, variety, and beauty of all things are steps whereby to ascend to one fountain and original of them.

Is it not a folly to deny the being of a wise Agent, who sparkles in the beauty and motions of the Heavens; rides upon the wings of the wind, and is writ upon the flowers and fruits of Plants. As the cause is known by the effects, so the wisdom of the cause is known by the elegancy of the work, the proportion of the parts to one another. Who can imagine the world could be rashly made, and without consultation, which in every part of it is so Artificially framed? \* No work of Art springs up of its own accord. The world is framed by an excellent Art, and therefore made by some skilful Artist. As we hear not a melodious instrument, but we conclude there is a Musitian that touches it, as well as some skilful hand that framed, and disposed it for those Lessons. And no man that hears the pleasant sound of a Lute but will fix his thoughts, not upon the Instrument it self, but upon the skill of the Artist that made it, and the art of the Musitian that strikes it, though he should not see the first, when he saw the Lute, nor see the other when he hears the harmony. So a rational Creature confines not his thoughts to his sense when he sees the Sun in its Glory and the Moon walking in its brightness; but riseth up in a contemplation and admiration of that infinite Spirit that composed, and filled them with such sweetness.

\* Philo. *Jud. 8.*  
Petav. *Theolog.*  
*Dogmat. Tom. 1.*  
*lib. 1. cap. 1.*  
pag. 9.

This appears.



1. *In the linking contrary qualities together.* All things are compounded of the Elements. Those are endued with contrary qualities, driness and moisture, heat and cold. These would always be contending with and infesting one anothers rights, till the contest ended in the destruction of one or both. Where fire is predominant, it would suck up the water; where water is prevalent, it would quench the fire. The heat would wholly expel the cold, or the cold over-power the heat. Yet we see them chained and linkt one within another in every body upon the Earth, and rendring mutual offices for the benefit of that body wherein they are seated, and all conspiring together in their particular quarrels for the publick interest of the body. How could those contraries that of themselves observe no order, that are always preying upon one another, joyntly accord together of themselves, for one common end, if they were not linkt in a common band, and reduced to that order by some incomprehensible wisdom and power, which keeps a hand upon them, orders their motions and directs their events, and makes them friendly pass into one anothers Natures? Confusion had been the result of the discord and diversity of their Natures. No composition could have been of those conflicting qualities for the frame of any body, nor any harmony arose from so many jarring strings, if they had not been reduced, into concord by one that is supream Lord over them, and knows how to dispose their varieties and enmities for the publick good. \* If a man should see a large City or Country consisting of great multitudes of men of different tempers, full of Frauds and Factions and Animosities in their natures against one another, yet living together in good order and peace, without oppressing and invading one another and joyning together for the publick good; he would presently conclude, there were some excellent Governor, who tempered them by his Wisdom, and preserved the publick Peace, though he had never yet beheld him with his eye. Tis as necessary to conclude a God, who moderates the contrarieties in the world; as to conclude a wise Prince who overrules the contrary dispositions in a state, making every one to keep his own bounds and confines. Things that are contrary to one another subsist in an admirable order.

\* Arhanasius  
Petav. Theol.  
Dog. Tom. 1.  
lib. 1. cap. 1.  
pag. 4. 5.

\* Gassend.  
Physic. sect. 1.  
lib. 4. cap. 2.  
pag. 315.

2. *In the subserviency of one thing to another.* \* All the Members of living Creatures are curiously fitted for the service of one another, destin'd to a particular end, and endued with a vertue to attain that end, and so distinctly placed, that one is no hinderance to the other in its operations. Is not this more admirable than to be the work of chance, which is incapable to settle such an order and fix particular and general ends, causing an exact correspondency of all the parts with one another, and every part to conspire together for one common end? One thing is fitted for another. The Eye is fitted for the Sun, and the Sun fitted for the Eye. Several sorts of food are fitted for several Creatures, and those Creatures fitted with Organs for the partaking that food.

\* Lessius.

1. *Subserviency of Heavenly bodies.* \* The Sun, the heart of the world, is not for it self but for the good of the World, as the heart of man is for the good of the body. How conveniently is the Sun placed, at a distance from the Earth, and the upper Heavens, to enlighten the Stars above and enliven the Earth below? If it were either higher or lower, one part would want its influences. Tis not in the higher parts of the Heavens; the Earth then which lives and fructifies by its influence would have been exposed to a perpetual Winter and chilness, unable to have produced any thing for the sustenance of man or beast. If seated lower, the Earth had been parch'd up, the world made uninhabitable and long since had been consumed to ashes by the strength of its heat. Consider the motion as well as the Situation of the Sun. Had it stood still, one part of the World had been cherished by its beams, and the other left in a desolate Widow-hood, in a disconsolate darkness. Besides, the Earth would have had no shelter from its perpendicular beams striking perpetually and without any remission upon it. The same inconveniences would have followed upon its fixedness as upon its too great nearness. By a constant day the beauty of the Stars had been obscured, the knowledge of their motions been prevented, and a considerable part of the Glorious wisdom of the Creator in those choice *works of his fingers* \* had been vail'd from our eyes. It moves in a fixed line, visits all parts of the Earth, scatters in the day its refreshing blessings in every creeke of the Earth, and removes the mask from the other beauties of Heaven in the night, which sparkle out to the glory of

\* Psal. 8. 3.



of the Creator. It spreads its Light, warms the Earth, cherisheth the Seeds, excites the Spirit in the Earth, and brings Fruit to maturity. View also the Air, the vast extent between Heaven and Earth, which serves for a Water-course, a Cistern for water, to bedew the face of the Sun-burnt Earth, to satisfy the desolate ground and to cause the *bud of the tender herb to spring forth*. \* Could Chance appoint the Clouds of the Air to interpose as fans between the scorching heat of the Sun, and the faint bodies of the Creatures? Can that be the *Father of the Rain* or *beget the drops of dew*? \* Could any thing so blind settle those ordinances of Heaven for the preservation of Creatures on the Earth? Can this either bring or stay the bottles of Heaven, when the *dust grows into hardness*, and the *Clouds cleave fast together*? \*

\* Job. 38. 25  
27.

\* Job. 38. 28.

\* Job. 38. 27.  
33.

2. *Subserviency of the lower World, the Earth, and Sea*, which was Created to be inhabited, *Iſa.* 45. 18. The Sea affords water to the Rivers, the Rivers like so many veins are spread through the whole body of the Earth to refresh and enable it to bring forth fruit for the sustenance of man and beast, *Pſal.* 104. 10. 11. *He sends the Springs into the Vallies, which run among the Hills, they give drink to every Beast of the Field, the wild Asses quench their thirst. He causes the Grass to grow for the Cattle, and the herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the Earth*, v. 14. The Trees are provided for shades against the extremity of heat, a refuge for the panting beasts, *an habitation for Birds* wherein to make their nests. *Jer.* 17. and a Basket for their provision. How are the Vallies and Mountains of the Earth disposed for the pleasure and profit of man? Every year are the Fields covered with Harvests, for the nourishing the Creatures, no part is Barren but beneficial to man. The Mountains that are not cloathed with grass for his food are set with stones to make him an Habitation; they have their peculiar services of metals and minerals for the conveniency and comfort and benefit of man. Things which are not fit for his food are medicines for his cure under some painful sickness. Where the Earth brings not forth Corn, it brings forth Roots, for the service of other Creatures. Wood abounds more in those Countries where the cold is stronger than in others. Can this be the result of Chance, or not rather of an infinite Wisdom?

Consider the usefulness of the Sea, for the supply of Rivers to refresh the Earth. *Which go up by the Mountains and down by the Vallies into the place God hath founded for them*, *Pſal.* 104. 8. A store-house for fish for the nourishment of other Creatures, a shop of Medicines for cure, and Pearls for ornament. The band that ties remote Nations together, by giving opportunity of passage to and commerce with one another. How should that natural inclination of the Sea to cover the Earth, submit to this subserviency to the Creatures? Who hath pounded in this fluid mass of Water in certain limits, and confin'd it to its own Channel, for the accommodation of such Creatures, who by its common Law can only be upon the Earth? Naturally the Earth was covered with the deep as with a Garment, the waters stood above the Mountains. *Who set a bound that they might not pass over, that they return not again to cover the Earth*? \* Was it blind Chance, or an Infinite Power, that shut up the Sea with doors, and made thick darkness a swaddling band for it, and said hitherto shall thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be staid? \*

\* Pſa. 104. 6. 9.

\* Job. 38. 8. 9.

1 L.

All things are so ordered that they are not *propter se* but *propter aliud*. What advantage accrues to the Sun by its unwearied rouling about the World? Doth it increase the perfection of its nature by all its Circuits? No, but it serves the inferior world, it impregnates things by its heat. Not the most abject thing, but hath its end and use. There is a strait connexion, the Earth could not bring forth fruit without the Heavens, the Heavens could not water the Earth without vapours from it.

3. *All this Subserviency of Creatures centers in man*. Other Creatures are served by those things as well as our selves, and they are provided for their nourishment and refreshment as well as ours; \* yet both they and all Creatures meet in man as lines in their Centers: Things that have no life or sense are made for those that have both life and sense, and those that have life and sense are made for those that are endued with reason. When the *Psalmist* admiringly considers the Heavens, Moon and Stars, he intimates man to be the end for which they were Created, *Pſal.* 8. 3,

\* *Amirald. de Trinitate* pa. 13. and pag. 18.

4. *What is man that thou art mindful of him*? He expresseth more particularly the Dominion



Dominion that Man hath over the beasts of the field, the fowl of the Air, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the Sea, vers. 6. 7. 8. and concludes from thence the excellency of Gods Name in all the Earth. All things in the World one way or other Center in an usefulness for man, some to feed him, some to clothe him, some to delight him, others to instruct him, some to exercise his wit, and others his strength. Since man did not make them, he did not also order them for his own use. If they conspire to serve him who never made them, they direct man to acknowledge another, who is the joynt Creator both of the Lord and the Servants under his Dominion. And therefore as the inferior natures are ordered by an invisible hand for the good of man; so the nature of man is by the same hand ordered to acknowledge the Existence and the glory of the Creator of him. This visible order man knows he did not constitute, he did not settle those Creatures in subserviency to himself; they were placed in that order before he had any acquaintance with them, or Existence of himself, which is a question God puts to Job, to consider of, Job 38. 4. *Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the Earth, declare if thou hast understanding?* All is ordered for Mans use, the Heavens answer to the Earth as a roof to a floor, both composing a delightful habitation for man; vapors ascend from the Earth, and the Heaven concocts them, and returns them back in welcome showers for the supplying of the Earth. \* The light of the Sun descends to beautifie the Earth, and employs its heat to midwife its fruits, and this for the good of the community, whereof Man is the head; and though all Creatures have distinct natures and must act for particular ends according to the Law of their Creation; yet there is a joynt combination for the good of the whole, as the common end; just as all the Rivers in the world, from what part soever they come, whether North or South, fall into the Sea for the supply of that mass of waters; which loudly proclaims some infinitely wise nature, who made those things in so exact an harmony. \* [As in a Clock, the hammer which strikes the bell, leads us to the next Wheel, that to another, the little wheel to a greater, whence it derives its motion, this at last to the spring, which acquaints us that there was some Artist that framed them in this subordination to one another for this orderly motion.]

\* Jer. 10. 13.

\* Morn. de  
rev. cap. 1.  
pag. 7.

\* Amirauc.

4. *This order or Subserviency is regular and uniforme.* Every thing is determined to its peculiar nature. \* The Sun and Moon make day and night, months and years, determine the seasons, never are defective in coming back to their station and place, they wander not from their Roads, shock not against one another, nor hinder one another in the functions assigned them. From a small grain or seed a Tree springs, with body, root, bark, leaves, fruit of the same shape, figure, smell, taste; that there should be as many parts in one as in all of the same kind, and no more, and that in the Womb of a sensitive Creature, should be formed one of the same kind, with all the due members and no more, and the Creature that produceth it knows not how it is formed or how tis perfected. If we say this is nature; this nature is an intelligent being; if not, how can it direct all causes to such uniforme ends. If it be intelligent, this nature must be the same we call God, *Who ordered every herb to yeild seed, and every fruit-Tree to yeild fruit after its kind, and also every Beast and every creeping thing after its kind,* Gen. 11, 12, 24.

And every thing is determined to its particular season. The sap riseth from the Root at its appointed time, enlivening and cloathing the branches with a new Garment at such a time of the Suns returning, not wholly hindered by any accidental coldness of the weather, it being often colder at its return, than it was at the Suns departure. All things have their Seasons of flourishing, budding, blossoming, bringing forth fruit; they ripen in their seasons, cast their leaves at the same time; throw off their old cloaths, and in the spring appear with new Garments, but still in the same fashion.

\* Coccei. sum.  
Theol. cap. 8.  
§ 77.

\* The Winds and the Rain have their seasons and seem to be administred by laws for the profit of man: No satisfactory cause of those things can be ascribed to the Earth, the Sea, to the Air or Stars. *Can any understand the spreading of his clouds or the noise of his Tabernacle?* Job 38. 29. The natural reason of those things cannot be demonstrated without recourse to an infinite and intelligent being: Nothing can be rendred capable of the direction of those things but a God.

This regularity in Plants and Animals is in all Nations. The Heavens have the same



same motion in all parts of the world ; all men have the same Law of nature in their mind ; all Creatures are stamp'd with the same law of Creation : In all parts the same Creatures serve for the same use ; and though there be different Creatures in *India* and *Europe*, yet they have the same subordination, the same subserviency to one another, and ultimately to man ; which shows that there is a God, and but one God, who tunes all those different strings to the same notes in all places. Is it nature merely conducts these natural causes in due measures to their proper effects, without interfering with one another ? Can meer nature be the cause of those musical proportions of time ? You may as well conceive a *Lute* to sound its own strings without the hand of an *Artist* ; a City well Governed without a Governor ; an Army keep its Stations without a General, as imagine so exact an order, without an Orderer : Would any Man, when he hears a Clock strike, by fit intervals, the hour of the day, imagine this regularity in it, without the direction of one that had understanding to manage it ? He would not only regard the motion of the Clock, but commend the diligence of the Clock-keeper.

5. *This order and Subserviency is constant.* Children change the customs and manners of their Fathers : Magistrats change the Laws they have received from their Ancestors, and enact new ones in their room : But in the world all things consist as they were created at the beginning ; The Law of nature in the Creatures hath met with no change. \* Who can behold the Sun rising in the morning ; the Moon shining in the night ; increasing and decreasing in its due spaces ; the Stars in their regular motions night after night, for all ages, and yet deny a President over them ? And this motion of the Heavenly bodies, being contrary to the nature of other Creatures, who move in order to rest ; must be from some higher cause. But those ever since the setting in their places, have been perpetually rounding the world : \* What nature, but one powerful and intelligent, could give that perpetual motion to the *Sun*, which being bigger than the Earth a hundred sixty six times, runs many thousand miles with a mighty swiftness in the space of an hour, with an unwearied diligence, performing its daily task, and as a strong man, rejoicing to run its race, for above five thousand years together, without intermission, but in the time of *Josuah* ? \* Tis not nature's Sun, but *Gods Sun*, which he makes to rise upon the just and unjust. \*

\* Petav. ex  
Athanas. T. 2. l.  
Dog. tom. 1.  
lib. 1. cap. 1.  
§ 4.

\* (Whether it  
be the Sun, or  
the Earth that  
moves, it is all  
one : When  
have either of  
them this con-  
stant and uni-  
form motion ?)  
\* Josh. 10. 13.  
\* Mic. 5. 45.

So a *Plant* receives its nourishment from the Earth, sends forth its juyce to every branch, forms a bud which spreads it into a blossom and flower, the leaves of this drop off, and leave a fruit of the same colour and taste, every year ; which being ripened by the Sun, leaves seeds behind it for the propagation of its like, which contains in the nature of it, the same kind of buds, blossoms, fruit which were before ; and being nourished in the Womb of the Earth, and quickened by the power of the Sun, discovers it self at length, in all the progresses, and motions which its predecessor did : Thus in all ages, in all places, every year it performs the same task, spins out fruit of the same colour, taste, virtue, to refresh the several Creatures, for which they are provided.

This settled state of things comes from that God who laid the foundations of the Earth, that it should not be removed for ever ; \* and set ordinances for them to act by a stated law ; \* according to which they move as if they understood themselves to have made a Covenant with their Creator. \*

\* Psal. 104. 5.

\* Job. 38. 33.

\* Jer. 33. 20.

3. Add to this union of contrary qualities, and the subserviency of one thing to another ; the admirable variety and diversity of things in the World. What variety of Metals, living Creatures, Plants, what variety and distinction in the shape of their leaves, flowers, smell, resulting from them ? Who can number up the several sorts of Beasts on the Earth, Birds in the Air, Fish in the Sea ? How various are their motions ? Some Creep, some Go, some Fly, some Swim ; And in all this variety each Creature hath Organs or members, fitted for their peculiar motion. If you consider the multitude of Stars, which shine like Jewels in the Heavens, their different magnitudes ; Or the variety of colours in the Flowers and Tapestry of the Earth, you could no more conclude they made themselves, or were made by chance, than you can imagine a peice of Arras, with a diversity of figures and colours, either wove it self, or were knit together by hazzard.



How delicious is the sap of the Vine, when turned into Wine, above that of a Crab? Both have the same Womb of Earth to conceive them, both agree in the nature of Wood and Twigs, as Channels to convey it into fruit: What is that which makes the one so sweet, the other so fower, or makes that sweet, which was a few weeks before unpleasantly sharp? Is it the Earth? No: They both have the same soil; the Branches may touch each other; the strings of their Roots may under ground entwine about one another. Is it the Sun? both have the same beams: Why is not the taste and colour of the one as gratifying as the other? Is it the root? The taste of that is far different from that of the fruit it bears. Why do they not when they have the same Soil, the same Sun, and stand near one another, borrow something from one another's nature? No reason can be rendered, but that there is a God of infinite Wisdom, hath determin'd this variety, and bound up the nature of each Creature within it self. \* [Every thing follows the Law of its Creation, and it is worthy observation, that the Creator of them hath not given that power to Animals, which arise from different species, to propagate the like to themselves: As Mules that arise from different species: No reason can be rendered of this, but the fixt determination of the Creator, that those species which were Created by him should not be lost in those mixtures, which are contrary to the Law of the Creation.] This cannot possibly be ascribed to that which is commonly called nature, but unto the God of nature, who will not have his Creatures exceed their bounds or come short of them.

\* Arnold. de  
Trinitate p. 221.

Now since among those varieties, there are somethings better than other, yet *all are good in their kind*, and partake of Goodness, \* there must be something better and more excellent than all those, from whom they derive that goodness, which inheres in their nature and is communicated by them to others: And this excellent Being must inherit in an eminent way in his own nature, the goodness of all those varieties, since they made not themselves, but were made by another. All that goodness which is scattered in those varieties must be infinitely concentrated in that nature, which distributed those various perfections to them, Psal. 94. 9. *He that Planted the Ear shall not be hear; he that formed the Eye, shall not be see; he that teacheth Man knowledge shall not be know?* The Creator is greater than the Creature, and whatsoever is in his effects, is but an Impression of some excellency in himself; There is therefore some chief fountain of goodness, whence all those various goodnesses in the world do flow.

\* Gen. 1. 31.

From all this it follows, if there be an Order, and Harmony, there must be an Orderer, one that *made the Earth by his Power, established the world by his Wisdom, and stretched out the Heavens by his Discretion*, Jer. 10. 12. Order being the effect, cannot be the cause of it self: Order is the disposition of things to an end, and is not intelligent, but implies an intelligent Orderer: And therefore it is as certain that there is a God, as it is certain there is order in the world: Order is an effect of Reason and Counsel; this reason and Counsel must have its residence in some being, before this order was fixed: The things ordered are always distinct from that Reason and Counsel whereby they are ordered, and also after it as the effect is after the cause. No Man begins a piece of work, but he hath the Model of it in his own mind: No Man builds an House, or makes a Watch, but he hath the *Idea* or Copy of it in his own head: This beautiful world bespeaks an Idea of it, or a model: Since there is such a magnificent wisdom in the make of each Creature, and the proportion of one Creature to another, this model must be before the World, as the pattern is always before the thing that is wrought by it. This therefore must be in some intelligent and wise agent, and this is God: Since the reason of those things exceed the reason and all the art of Man, who can ascribe them to any inferior cause? Chance it could not be; the motions of Chance are not constant, and at set seasons, as the motions of Creatures are: That which is by Chance is contingent, this is necessary; Uniformity can never be the birth of Chance: Who can imagine that all the parts of a Watch can meet together and put themselves in order and motion by Chance? [\* Nor can it be nature only which indeed is a disposition of second causes: If nature hath not an understanding, it cannot work such effects: If nature therefore uses Counsel to begin a thing, reason to dispose it, art to effect it, vertue to compleat it and power to Govern it, why should it be called nature rather than God?] Nothing so sure as that that which hath an end to which it tends, hath a cause by which it is ordered to that end:

\* Laflant.

Since



Since therefore all things are ordered in subserviency to the good of man, they are so ordered by him that made both man and them; And man must acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of his Creator, and act in subserviency to His glory, as other Creatures act in subserviency to His good: Sensible objects were not made only to gratify the sense of man, but to hand something to his mind as he is a rational Creature; to discover God to him as an object of love and desire to be enjoyed: \* If this be not the effect of it, the order of the Creature, as to such an one, is in vain, and falls short of its true end.

\* Coccei. sum.  
Theol. cap. 8.  
§ 63. 64.

To conclude this; As when a Man comes into a Palace, built according to the exactest rule of art, and with an unexceptionable conveniency for the Inhabitants, he would acknowledge both the being and skill of the Builder: So whosoever shall observe the disposition of all the parts of the World, their connexion, comelines, the variety of seasons, the swarms of different Creatures, and the mutual offices they render to one another, cannot conclude less, than that it was contrived by an *Infinite Skill*, effected by *Infinite Power*, and governed by *Infinite Wisdom*. None can imagine a Ship to be orderly conducted without a Pilot; Nor the parts of the World to perform their several functions without a wise guide; considering the Members of the Body, cannot perform theirs, without the active presence of the Soul. The *Atheist then is a fool*, to deny that which every Creature in his constitution asserts, and thereby renders himself, unable to give a satisfactory account of that constant uniformity in the motions of the Creatures.

*Thirdly, III.* As the production and harmony, so particular Creatures, pursuing and attaining their ends, manifest that there is a God. All particular Creatures have natural instincts, which move them for some end: The intending of an end, is a property of a rational Creature; since the lower Creatures cannot challenge that title, they must act by the understanding and direction of another: And since man cannot challenge the honor of inspiring the Creatures with such instincts, it must be ascribed to some nature infinitely above any Creature in understanding. No Creature doth determine it self. Why do the fruits and grain of the Earth nourish us, when the Earth which instrumentally gives them that fitness, cannot nourish us, but because their several ends are determined by one higher than the world?

1. *Several Creatures have several Natures.* How soon will all Creatures, as soon as they see the light, move to that whereby they must live, and make use of the natural arms God hath given their kind, for their defence, before they are grown to any maturity to afford them that defence? The Scripture makes the appetite of Infants to their milk a foundation of the divine Glory, *Psal. 8. 3. Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings, hast thou ordained strength*; that is, matter of praise and acknowledgment of God, in the natural appetite they have to their milk and their relish of it. All Creatures have a natural affection to their young ones; all young ones by a natural instinct, move to, and receive the nourishment that is proper for them: Some are their own Physicians as well as their own Caterers, and naturally discern what preserves them in life, and what restores them when sick. The *Swallow* flies to its *Celandine*, and the *Toad* hastens to its *Plantain*.

Can we behold the Spiders Nets, or Silkworms Web, the Bees Closets, or the Ants Granaries, without acknowledging a higher Being than a Creature, who hath planted that Genius in them? The consideration of the nature of several Creatures God commended to *Job*, (*Chap. 39.* where he discourseth to *Job* of the natural instincts, of the *Goat*, the *Ostrich*, *Horse* and *Eagle*, &c.) to persuade him to the acknowledgment and admiration of God and humiliation of himself.

The Spider, as if it understood the art of weaving, fits its web both for its own Habitation, and a Net to catch its prey. The Bee builds a Cell which serves for Chambers to reside in, and a repository for its provision. Birds are observed to build their Nests with a clammy matter without, for the firmer duration of it, and with a soft moss and down within for the conveniency and warmth of their young: *The Stork knows his appointed time.* *Jer. 8. 7.* And the Swallows observe the time of their coming; they go and return according to the seasons of the year: This they gain not by consideration, it descends to them with their nature: They neither gain nor increase it by rational deductions. 'Tis not in vain to speak of these. How little do we improve by Meditation those objects, which daily offer themselves



\* Mar. 6. 12.

to our view; full of instructions for us? And our *Saviour* sends his disciples to *spell* God in the *Lillies*. \* Tis observed also that the Creatures offensive to man go single: If they went by troops, they would bring destruction upon man and beast. This is the nature of them for the preservation of others.

2. *They knew not their end.* They have a Law in their natures, but have no rational understanding, either of the end to which they are appointed, or the means fit to attain it: They naturally do what they do, and move by no Counsel of their own, but by a Law imprest by some higher hand upon their natures.

What Plant knows why it strikes its root into the earth? Doth it understand what storms it is to contest with, or why it shoots up its branches towards Heaven? Doth it know it needs the droppings of the clouds to preserve it self, and make it fruitful? These are acts of understanding: The root is downward to preserve its own standing, the branches upward to preserve other Creatures: This understanding is not in the Creature itself, but originally in another. Thunders and Tempests know not why they are sent, yet by the direction of a mighty hand they are instruments of Justice upon a wicked world.

\* Coccei. sum.  
Theol. cap. 8.  
§ 57. &c.

\* Peirson, on  
the Creed p. 35.

\* Rational Creatures that act for some end, and know the end they aim at, yet know not the manner of the natural motion of the members to it. When we intend to look upon a thing, we take no counsel about the natural motion of our eyes, we know not all the principles of their operations; or how that dull matter whereof our bodies are composed, is subject to the order of our minds. \* We are not of Counsel with our stomachs about the concoction of our meat, or the distribution of the nourishing juyce to the several parts of the body. Neither the Mother nor the *Fetus* sit in Council how the formation should be made in the Womb. We know no more than a plant knows what Stature it is of, and what medicinal vertue its fruit hath for the good of man; yet all those natural operations are perfectly directed to their proper end, by an higher wisdom than any human understanding is able to conceive, since they exceed the ability of an inanimate or fleshly nature, yea and the wisdom of a man. Do we not often see reasonable Creatures acting for one end, and perfecting a higher than what they aimed at, or could suspect? When *Joseph* Brethren sold him for a Slave, their end was to be rid of an Informer: \* But the action issued in preparing him to be the preserver of them and their families. *Cyrus* his end was to be a Conqueror, but the action ended in being the *Jews* deliverer, Prov. 16. 9. *A mans heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directs his steps.*

\* Gen. 37. 2.

\* Lessius de  
providen. lib. 1.  
pag. 652.

3. Therefore there is some superior understanding and nature which so acts them. That which acts for an end unknown to it self, depends upon some over-ruling wisdom that knows that end. Who should direct them in all those ends, but he that bestowed a being upon them for those ends, \* who knows what is convenient for their life, security and propagation of their natures? An exact knowledge is necessary both of what is agreeable to them, and the means whereby they must attain it, which since it is not inherent in them, is in that wise God, who puts those instincts into them, and governs them in the exercise of them to such ends. Any man that sees a dart flung, knows it cannot hit the mark without the skill and strength of an Archer. Or he that sees the hand of a Dial pointing to the hours successively, knows that the Dial is ignorant of its own end, and is disposed and directed in that motion by an other. All Creatures ignorant of their own natures could not universally in the whole kind, and in every Climate and Country, without any difference in the whole world, tend to a certain end, if some over-ruling wisdom did not preside over the world and guide them: and if the Creatures have a Conductor, they have a Creator: All things are turned round about by his Council, that they may do whatsoever he Commands them upon the face of the world in the earth. \*

\* Job. 37. 12.

So that in this respect the folly of Atheism appears. Without the owning a God no account can be given of those actions of Creatures, that are an imitation of Reason: To say the Bees, &c. are rational, is to equal them to man; nay make them his superiors, since they do more by nature than the wisest man can do by art: Tis their own Counsel whereby they act, or anothers; If it be their own, they are reasonable Creatures; If by anothers, tis not meer nature that is necessary; Then other Creatures would not be without the same skill: There would be no difference among them: If nature be restrained by another, it hath a superior; if not tis a free agent:



agent: Tis an understanding being that directs them: And then it is something superior to all Creatures in the world, and by this therefore we may ascend to the acknowledgment of the necessity of a God.

*Fourthly*, IV. Add to the production and order of the world and the Creatures acting for their end, *the preservation of them*. Nothing can depend upon it self in its preservation, no more than it could in its being. If the order of the world was not fixed by it self, the preservation of that order cannot be continued by it self.

Tho the matter of the world after Creation cannot return to that nothing whence it was fetched, without the power of God that made it, (because the same power is as requisite to reduce a thing to nothing as to raise a thing from nothing,) yet without the actual exerting of a power that made the Creatures, they would fall into confusion. Those contesting qualities which are in every part of it, could not have preserved, but would have consumed, and extinguisht one another, and reduced the world to that confused Chaos, wherein it was before the Spirit moved upon the waters: As contrary parts could not have met together in one form, unless there had been one that had conjoyned them: So they could not have kept together after their conjunction unless the same hand had preserved them. Natural contrarieties cannot be reconciled. Tis as great power to keep discords knit, as at first to link them. Who would doubt, but that an Army made up of several Nations and humors, would fall into a Civil War, and sheath their Swords in one anothers bowels, if they were not under the management of some wise General, or a Ship dash against the Rocks without the skill of a Pilot? \* As the body hath neither life nor motion, without the active presence of the Soul, which distributes to every part the vertue of acting; sets every one in the exercise of its proper function and resides in every part: So there is some powerful cause which doth the like in the world, that rules and tempers it. There is need of the same power and action, to preserve a thing, as there was at first to make it. When we consider that we are preserved, and know that we could not preserve our selves; we must necessarily run to some first cause which doth preserve us. All works of art depend upon nature, and are preserved while they are kept by the force of nature: As a Statue depends upon the matter whereof it is made, whither stone or brass; this nature therefore must have some superior by whose influx it is preserved. Since therefore we see a stable order in the things of the world, that they conspire together for the good and beauty of the universe; that they depend upon one another: There must be some principle upon which they do depend; something to which the first link of the chain is fastened, which himself depends upon no superior, but wholly rests in his own essence and being: Tis the title of God to be the *preserver of man and beast*. \* The Psalmist elegantly describeth it, Psal. 104. 24. &c. *The Earth is full of his riches, all wait upon him, that he may give them their meat in due season; when he opens his hand he fills them with good; when he hides his face they are troubled if he take away their breath they die and return to dust; he sends forth his Spirit and, they are Created, and renews the face of the Earth, the glory of the Lord shall endure for ever, and the Lord shall rejoyce in his works*: Upon the consideration of all which the Psalmist v. 34. takes a pleasure in the *Meditation* of God as the cause and manager of all those things; which issues into a joy in God and a praising of him. And why should not the consideration of the power and wisdom of God in the Creatures produce the same effect in the hearts of us, if he be our God? Or as some render it, *my Meditation shall be sweet*, or acceptable to him, whereby I find matter of praise in the things of the world, and offer it to the Creator of it.

*Thirdly*, III. Reason, *Tis a folly to deny that which a mans own nature witnesseth to him*. The whole frame of bodies and Souls bears the impress of the infinite power and wisdom of the Creator. A body framed with an admirable Architecture, a Soul endowed with Understanding, Will, Judgment, Memory, Imagination. Man is the Epitome of the World, contains in himself the substance of all natures, and the fulness of the whole universe; not only in regard of the universalness of his knowledge, whereby he comprehends the reasons of many things; but as all the perfections of the several natures of the world are gathered and united in man, for the perfection of his own, in a smaller volum. In his Soul he partakes of Heaven, in his body of the earth. There is the life of *Plants*, the sense of *beasts*, and the intellectual

\* Gallend. *Phys.*  
*sect. 5. lib. 4.*  
*cap. 2. pa. 101.*

\* *Psal. 36. 6.*

*The third Reas.*



\* Gen. 2. 7.

telleſtual nature of *Angels*. \* *The Lord breathed into his Noſtril the breath of life, and man, &c.* *אֵלֶּיךָ of lifes.* Not one ſort of, *lifes*; but ſeveral, not only an *Animal*, but a *Rational* life; a Soul of a Nobler extract and nature, than what was given to other Creatures.

So that we need not ſtep out of doors, or caſt our eyes any further than our ſelves, to behold a God. He ſhines in the capacity of our Souls and the vigour of our Members. We muſt flie from our ſelves and be ſtript of our own humanity, before we can put off the Notion of a Deity: He that is ignorant of the Exiſtence of God, muſt be poſſeſſed with ſo much folly, as to be ignorant of his own make and frame.

1. *In the parts whereof he doth conſiſt, Body and Soul.*

*First, I. Take a proſpect of the Body.* The *Pſalmiſt* counts it a matter of praiſe and admiration, *Pſal. 139. 15, 16. I will praiſe thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; when I was made in ſecret and curiouſly wrought in the loweſt parts of the Earth, in thy book all my Members were written.* The Scheme of man and every Member was drawn in his book: All the Sinews, Veins, Arteries, Bones, like a peice of Embroidery or Tapeſtry, were wrought by God, as it were with deliberation; like an Artiſicer that draws out the model of what he is to do in writing, and ſets it before him when he begins his work.

And indeed the *Fabrick* of mans Body, as well as his Soul, is an argument for a Divinity. The artificial ſtructure of it, the Elegancy of every part, the proper Situation of them, their proportion one to another, the ſiteneſs for their ſeveral functions, drew from *Galen*, \* (a Heathen and one that had no raiſed ſentiments of a Deity,) a confeſſion of the admirable Wiſdom and Power of the Creator, and that none but God could frame it.

\* Lib. 3. de  
uſu. partium.  
Petav. Theol.  
Dog. Tom. 1.  
lib. 1. cap. 1.  
pa. 6.

1. *In the order, ſiteneſs and uſefulneſs of every part.* The whole model of the body is grounded upon reaſon. Every member hath its exact proportion, diſtinct office, regular motion. Every part hath a particular comlineſs, and convenient temperament beſtowed upon it, according to its place in the Body. The *Heart* is hot to enliven the whole. The *Eye* clear to take in objects to preſent them to the Soul: Every member is fitted for its peculiar ſervice and action: Some are for ſenſe, ſome for motion, ſome for preparing, and others for diſpenſing nourishment to the ſeveral parts: They mutually depend upon, and ſerve one another. What ſmall ſtrings faſten the particular members together, *as the Earth that hangs upon nothing?* \* Take but one part away, and you either deſtroy the whole, or ſtamp upon it ſome mark of deformity. All are knit together by an admirable Symmetry; all orderly perform their functions, as acting by a ſetled Law; none ſwerving from their rule, but in caſe of ſome predominant humor: And none of thoſe in ſo great a multitude of parts, ſtified in ſo little a Room, or juſtling againſt one another to hinder their mutual actions; none can be better diſpoſed. And the greateſt wiſdom of man could not imagine it, till his eyes preſent them with the ſight and connexion of one part and member with another.

\* Job. 25. 7.

\* Theod. de  
providentiâ.  
Orat. 3.

1. *The Heart.* \* How ſtrongly it is guarded with ribs like a Wall, that it might not be eaſily hurt! It draws blood from the Liver, through a channel made for that purpoſe: Rarifies it and makes it fit to paſs through the Arteries and Veins, and to carry heat and life to every part of the body: And by a perpetual motion, it ſucks in the blood and ſpouts it out again; which motion depends not upon the command of the Soul, but is pure natural.

2. *The Mouth,* takes in the meat, the teeth grind it for the ſtomack, the ſtomack prepares it, nature ſtrains it through the milky veins, the liver refines it and mints it into blood, ſeparates the purer from the droſſy parts, which go to the heart, circuiſes through the whole body, running through the Veins like Rivers through ſo many channels of the world, for the watering of the ſeveral parts: Which are framed of a thin ſkin for the ſtraining the blood through, for the ſupply of the members of the body, and framed with ſeveral valves or doors, for the thruſting the blood forwards to perform its circular motion.

3. *The Brain,* fortified by a ſtrong ſkull to hinder outward accidents, a tough membrane or ſkin to hinder any oppreſſion by the ſkull; the ſeat of ſenſe; that which coins the animal ſpirits by purifying and refining thoſe which are ſent to it,



it, and seems like a curious piece of Needlework.

4. *The Ear*, framed with windings and turnings, to keep any thing from entering to offend the Brain; so disposed as to admit *sounds* with the greatest safety and delight; \* filled with an air within, by the motion whereof the sound is transmitted to the Brain: As sounds are made in the Air by diffusing themselves, as you see Circles made in the water by the flinging in a stone. This is the Gate of knowledge, whereby we hear the Oracles of God, and the instruction of men for arts: 'Tis by this they are exposed to the mind, and the mind of another Man framed in our understandings.

\* Eccles. 1.

5. *What a curious Workmanship is that of the Eye*, which is in the body, as the Sun in the World; set in the head as in a Watch-Tower, having the softest nerves for the receiving the greater multitude of Spirits necessary for the act of Vision? How is it provided with defence, by the variety of Coats to secure and accomodate the little humor and part whereby the vision is made? Made of a round figure and convex, as most commodious to receive the species of objects; shaded by the eye-brows and eye-lids, secured by the eye-lids which are its ornament and safety; which refresh it when it is too much dried by heat, hinder too much light from insinuating it self into it to offend it, cleanse it from impurities, by their quick motion preserve it from any invasion, and by contraction confer to the more evident discerning of things: Both the eyes seated in the hollow of the bone for security; yet standing out that things may be perceived more easily on both sides: And this little Member can behold the earth, and in a moment view things as high as Heaven.

6. \* *The Tongue* for speech framed like a Musical instrument; the Teeth serving for variety of sounds; the lungs serving for Bellows to blow the Organs as it were, to cool the Heart; by a continual motion transmitting a pure Air to the Heart, expelling that which was smoky and superfluous. 'Tis by the Tongue that communication of Truth hath a passage among men; it opens the sense of the mind; there would be no converse and commerce without it: Speech among all Nations hath an elegance and attractive force, mastering the affections of men.

\* Coccei. *sum.*  
*Theol. cap. 2.*  
§ 42.

Not to speak of other parts, or of the multitude of Spirits that act every part; the quick flight of them where there is a necessity of their presence. *Solomon* 12 *Ecclesiast.* makes an elegant description of them, in his Speech of old age: And *Job* speaks of this formation of the body, *Job* 10. 9, 10, 11, &c. Not the least part of the body is made in vain. The hairs of the Head have their use, as well as are an ornament. The whole Symmetry of the body is a ravishing object. Every Member hath a Signature and mark of God and his Wisdom: He is visible in the formation of the Members, the beauty of the parts, and the vigor of the body: This structure could not be from the body, that only hath a passive power, and cannot act in the absence of the Soul: Nor can it be from the Soul. How comes it then to be so ignorant of the manner of its formation? The Soul knows not the internal parts of its own body, but by information from others, or inspection into other bodies: It knows less of the inward frame of the body than it doth of it self: But he that makes the Clock can tell the number and motions of the wheels within, as well as what figures are without.

This short discourse is *useful* to raise our admirations of the Wisdom of God, as well as to demonstrate, that there is an Infinite, Wise Creator: And the consideration of our selves every day, and the wisdom of God in our frame would maintain Religion much in the world; Since all are so framed that no man can tell any error in the constitution of him. If thus the body of man is fitted for the service of his Soul by an infinite God, the body ought to be ordered for the service of this God and in obedience to him.

2. *In the admirable difference of the features of Men.* Which is a great argument that the world was made by a wise Being: This could not be wrought by Chance or be the work of meer nature, since we find never or very rarely two persons exactly alike. This distinction is a part of infinite wisdom; otherwise what confusion would be introduced into the World? Without this, Parents could not know their Children, nor Children their Parents, nor a Brother his Sister, nor a Subject his Magistrate: Without it there had been no comfort of Relations, no

Govern-



Government, no commerce: Debtors would not have been known from strangers, nor good men from bad: Propriety could not have been preserved, nor justice executed; the innocent might have been apprehended for the nocent; wickedness could not have been stopt by any Law.

The Faces of men are the same for parts, *not for features*: A dissimilitude in a likeness. Man, like to all the rest in the World, yet unlike to any, and differenced by some mark from all, which is not to be observed in any other species of Creatures. This speaks some wise Agent which framed man; since for the preservation of human society and order in the world, this distinction was necessary.

\* Coccei. *sum.*  
*The 1. cap.*  
*§ 50. 51.*

*Secondly, II.* As mans own nature witnesseth a God to him in the structure of his body, so also in the nature of his Soul. \* We know that we have an *understanding* in us; a substance we cannot see, but we know it by its operations; as thinking, reasoning, willing, remembring; And as operating about things that are invisible and remote from sense: This must needs be distinct from the body, for that being but dust and Earth in its original, hath not the power of reasoning, and thinking; for then it would have that power, when the Soul were absent, as well as when it is present. Besides, if it had that power of thinking, it could think only of those things which are sensible and made up of matter, as it self is. This Soul hath a greater excellency, it can know it self, rejoyce in it self, which other Creatures in this world are not capable of: The Soul is the greatest glory of this lower world, and as one saith; \* There seems to be no more difference between the Soul and an Angel, than between a Sword in the Scabbard and when it is Out of the Scabbard.

\* More.

\* Culverwel.

*First, I. Consider the vastness of its capacity.* The understanding can conceive the whole world, and paint in it self the invisible Pictures of all things. Tis capable of apprehending and discoursing of things superior to its own nature. [\* Tis suited to all objects, as the Eye to all Colours, or the Ear to all sounds.] How great is the Memory to retain such varieties, such diversities? The Will also can accommodate other things to it self. It invents Arts for the use of Man; prescribes rules for the Government of States; ransacks the bowels of nature; makes endless conclusions, and steps in reasoning from one thing to another, for the knowledge of Truth; It can contemplate and form notions of things higher than the world.

\* Theodoret.

*2. The quickness of its motion.* [\* Nothing is more quick in the whole course of nature; the Sun runs through the World in a day, this can do it in a moment. It can with one flight of fancy ascend to the battlements of Heaven.] The mists of the Air that hinder the sight of the Eye, cannot hinder the flights of the Soul; it can pass in a moment from one end of the World to the other, and think of things, a thousand miles distant. It can think of some mean thing in the world, and presently by one cast in the twinkling of an Eye, mount up as high as Heaven. As its desires are not bounded by sensual objects, so neither are the motions of it restrained by them. It will break forth with the greatest vigour, and conceive things infinitely above it; Though it be in the body, it acts as if it were ashamed to be Cloystered in it. This could not be the result of any material cause: Whoever knew meer matter understand, think, will? And what it hath not, it cannot give.

\* Coccei. *sum.*  
*The 2. cap. 2.*  
*§ 51. 52.*

That which is destitute of Reason and Will, could never confer Reason and Will. \* Tis not the effect of the Body, for the Body is fitted with members to be subject to it: Tis in part ruled by the activity of the Soul, and in part by the Counsel of the Soul; Tis used by the Soul and knows not how it is used. Nor could it be from the Parents, since the Souls of the Children often transcend those of the Parents in vivacity, acuteness and comprehensiveness: One man is stupid and begets a Son with a capacious understanding; one is debauched and beastly in morals, and begets a Son who from his Infancy testifies some vertuous inclinations, which sprout forth in delightful fruit with the ripeness of his age. Whence should this difference arise, a fool beget the wise man, and a debauched the vertuous man? The wisdom of the one could not descend from the foolish Soul of the other; nor the virtues of the Son, from the deformed and polluted Soul of the Parent; it lies not in the Organs of the Body; For if the folly of the Parent proceeded not from their Souls, but the ill disposition of the Organs of their bodies, how comes it to pass that the bodies of the Children are better Organiz'd beyond the goodness of their immediate cause? We must recur to some invisible hand, that makes the difference,

I do not dispute whether the Soul were generated or no; Suppose the substance of it was generated by the Parents, yet these more excellent qualities were not the result of them.



ference. who bestows upon one at his pleasure richer qualities, than upon another: You can see nothing in the World endowed with some excellent quality, but you must imagine some bountiful hand did enrich it with that dowry: None can be so foolish as to think that a vessel ever enriches itself with that spritely Liquor, wherewith it is filled; or that any thing worse than the Soul should endow it with that knowledge and activity which sparkles in it. Nature could not produce it: That nature is intelligent, or not; if it be not, then it produceth an effect more excellent than it self, in as much as an understanding being surmounts a being that hath no understanding; If the supream cause of the Soul be intelligent, why do we not call it God as well as nature? We must arise from hence to the notion of a God; a Spiritual nature cannot proceed but from a Spirit higher than it self, and of a transcendent perfection above it self: If we believe we have Souls and understand the state of our own faculties, we must be assured that there was some invisible hand which bestowed those faculties and the riches of them upon us: A man must be ignorant of himself before he can be ignorant of the Existence of God: By considering the nature of our Souls, we may as well be assured that there is a God, as that there is a Sun by the shining of the beams in at our Windows: And indeed the Soul is a Statue and representation of God, as the Land-Skip of a Country or Map represents all the parts of it, but in a far less proportion than the Country it self is. The Soul fills the body, and God the world; the Soul sustains the body, and God the World; the Soul sees, but is not seen; God sees all things, but is himself invisible. How base are they then that prostitute their Souls an image of God to base things unexpressibly below their own nature?

3. I might add *the union of Soul and Body*. Man is a kind of compound of Angel and Beast, of Soul and body; if he were only a Soul, he were a kind of Angel; if only a body, he were another kind of brute: Now that a body as vile and dull as earth, and a Soul that can mount up to Heaven, and rove about the world with so quick a motion, should be linkt in so strait an acquaintance; that so noble a being as the Soul should be an inhabitant in such a Tabernacle of Clay, must be owned to some infinite power that hath so chained it.

3. Man witnesseth to a God in the *operations and reflections of Conscience*. Rom. 2. 15. *Their thoughts are accusing or excusing*. An inward comfort attends good actions, and an inward torment follows bad ones; for there is in every mans Conscience, fear of punishment and hope of reward: There is therefore a sense of some superior Judge, which hath the power both of rewarding, and punishing: If man were his supream rule, what need he fear punishment, since no man would inflict any evil or torment on himself; nor can any man be said to reward himself, for all rewards refer to another, to whom the action is pleasing, and is a conferring some good a man had not before: If an action be done by a Subject or Servant, with hopes of reward, it can not be imagined, that he expects a reward from himself, but from the Prince or person whom he eyes in that action, and for whose sake he doth it.

1. *There is a Law in the minds of men, which is a rule of good and evil*. There is a Notion of Good and Evil in the Consciences of men, which is evident by those Laws which are common in all Countries, for the preserving human societies, the encouragement of Vertue, and discouragement of Vice; What Standard should they have for those Laws, but a common reason? The designe of those Laws was to keep men within the bounds of Goodness, for mutual commerce, whence the *Apostle* calls the Heathen Magistrate a *Minister of God for Good*. Rom. 13. 4. and *the Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the Law*, Rom. 2. 14.

Man in the first instant of the use of reason, finds natural principles within himself, directing and choosing them; he finds a distinction between good and evil; how could this be if there were not some rule in him to try and distinguish good and evil? If there were not such a law and rule in man, he could not sin; for where there is no Law there is no transgression. If man were a Law to himself and his own will his Law, there could be no such thing as evil; whatsoever he willed would be good and agreeable to the Law; and no action could be accounted sinful: The worst act would be as commendable as the best. Every thing at mans appointment would be good or evil. If there were no such Law, how should men that are naturally inclined to evil disapprove of that which is unlovely, and approve of that good which



they practise not. No man but inwardly thinks well of that which is good, while he neglects it; and thinks ill of that which is evil, while he commits it. Those that are vicious, do praise those that practise the contrary virtues. Those that are evil would seem to be good, and those that are blameworthy, yet will rebuke evil in others. This is really to distinguish between good and evil; whence doth this arise, by what rule do we measure this, but by some innate principle?

And this is universal, the same in one man as in another, the same in one Nation as in another, they are born with every man, and inseparable from his nature, Prov. 27. 19. *As in water face answers to face, so the heart of man to man.* Common reason supposeth, that there is some hand which hath fixed this distinction in man: How could it else be universally impressed? No Law can be without a Law-giver; no sparks but must be kindled, by some other: Whence should this Law then derive its original? Not from man; he would stain blot it out, and cannot alter it when he pleases: Natural generation never intended it; tis settled therefore by some higher hand, which as it imprinted it, so it maintains it against the violences of men; who, were it not for this Law, would make the world more than it is, an *Aeldema* and field of blood: For had there not been some supream good, the measure of all other goodness in the world, we could not have had such a thing as good. The Scripture gives us an account that this good was distinguished from evil before man fell, they were *objecta scibilia*; good was commanded and evil prohibited, and did not depend upon man: From this a man may rationally be instructed that there is a God: For he may thus argue; I find my self naturally obliged to do this thing and avoid that, I have therefore a superior that doth oblige me; I find something within me that directs me to such actions, *contrary to my sensitive appetite, there must* be something above me therefore that put this principle into mans nature: If there were no superior, I should be the supream Judge of good and evil: Were I the Lord of that Law which doth oblige me, I should find no contradiction within my self between reason and appetite.

2. *From the Transgression of this law of nature, fears do arise in the Consciences of men.* Have we not known or heard of men struck by so deep a dart, that could not be drawn out by the strength of men, or appeased by the pleasure of the world, and men crying out with horror upon a death-bed of their past life, when *their fear hath come as a desolation, and destruction as a whirlwind*, Prov. 1. 27. And often in some sharp affliction, the dust hath been blown off from mens Consciences, which for a while hath obscured the writing of the law. If men stand in awe of punishment, there is then some superior to whom they are accountable: If there were no God, there were no punishment to fear. What reason of any fear, upon the dissolution of the knot between the Soul and body, if there were not a God to punish, and the Soul remained not in being to be punished?

How suddenly will Conscience work upon the appearance of an affliction, rouse it self from sleep like an armed man, and fly in a mans face before he is aware of it? It will *surprize the Hypocrites*. Isa. 38. 14. It will bring to mind actions committed long ago, and set them in order before the face, as Gods deputy acting by his authority and Omniscience. As God hath not left himself without a witness among the Creatures, Acts 14. 17. So he hath not left himself without a witness in a mans own breast.

1. *This operation of Conscience hath been universal.* No Nation hath been any more exempt from it, than from reason: Not a man but hath one time or other more or less smarted under the sting of it. All over the world Conscience hath shot its darts. It hath torn the hearts of Princes in the midst of their pleasures: It hath not flattered them whom most men flatter, nor feared to disturb their rest, whom no man dares to provoke. Judges have trembled on a Tribunal, when Innocents have rejoiced in their condemnation: The Iron bars upon *Pharaohs* Conscience, were at last broke up, and he acknowledged the Justice of God in all that he did, Exod. 9. 27. *I have sinned, the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.* Had they been like Childish frights at the apprehension of bug-bears, why hath not reason shaken them off? But on the contrary the stronger reason grows, the smarter those lashes are: Groundless fears had been short liv'd, Age and Judgement would have worn them off, but they grow sharper with the growth of persons. The Scripture informs us they have been of as ancient a date as the revolt of the first man, Gen. 3. 10. *I was afraid, saith Adam, because I was naked*; which was an expectation of the Judgment of God. All his

posterity



posterity inherit his fears, when God expresseth himself in any tokens of his Majesty and Providence in the world. Every mans Conscience testifies that he is unlike what he ought to be according to that law engraven upon his heart. In some indeed Conscience may be seared, or dimmed, or suppose some men may be devoid of Conscience; shall it be denied to be a thing belonging to the nature of Man? Some Men have not their eyes, yet the power of seeing the light is natural to Man, and belongs to the integrity of the body: Who would argue, that because some men are mad and have lost their reason by a distemper of the brain, that therefore reason hath no reality, but is an imaginary thing? But I think it is a standing truth, that every man hath been under the scourge of it, one time or other, in a less or greater degree: For since every man is an offender, it cannot be imagined, Conscience which is natural to man and an active faculty, should always be idle, without doing this part of its office? The *Apostle* tells us of the thoughts, accusing or excusing one another, (or by turns) according as the actions were. Nor is this truth weakened by the corruptions in the world, whereby many have thought themselves bound in Conscience to adhere to a false and superstitious worship and Idolatry, as much as any have thought themselves bound to adhere to a Worship commanded by God. This very thing infers that all men have a reflecting principle in them; it is no argument against the being of Conscience, but only infers that it may Err in the application of what it naturally owns. We can no more say, that because some men walk by a false rule, there is no such thing as Conscience, than we can say that because men have Errors in their minds, therefore they have no such faculty as an Understanding; or because men will that which is evil, they have no such faculty as a Will in them.

2. *These operations of Conscience, are when the wickedness is most secret.* These tormenting fears of Vengeance, have been frequent in men, who have had no reason to fear man, since their wickedness being unknown to any but themselves, they could have no accuser but themselves. They have been in many acts which their companions have justified them in: Persons above the stroke of human laws, yea such as the people have honoured as Gods, have been haunted by them. Conscience hath not been frightened by the power of Princes, or brib'd by the pleasures of Courts: *David* was pursued by his horrors, when he was by reason of his dignity above the punishment by the Law, or at least was not reacht by the Law; since though the Murder of *Uriah* was intended by him, it was not acted by him. Such examples are frequent in human Records: When the crime hath been above any punishment by man, they have had an Accuser, Judge and Executioner in their own breasts: Can this be originally from a mans self? He who loves and cherishes himself, would fly from any thing that disturbs him: 'Tis a greater Power and Majesty from whom man cannot hide himself, that holds him in those fetters. What should affect their minds for that which can never bring them shame or punishment in this World, if there were not some supream Judge, to whom they were to give an account, whose instrument Conscience is? Doth it do this of it self; hath it received an Authority from the man himself to sting him? It is some supream power, that doth direct and commission it against our Wills.

3. *These operations of Conscience cannot be totally shaken off by Man.* If there be no God, why do not men silence the clamors of their Consciences, and scatter those fears that disturb their rest and pleasures? How inquisitive are men after some remedy against those convulsions? Sometimes they would render the charge insignificant and sing a rest to themselves, though they *walk in the wickedness of their own hearts*: \* How often do men attempt to drown it by sensual pleasures, and perhaps over-power it for a time; but it revives, reinforce it self and Acts a revenge for its former stop. It holds sin to a mans view, and fixes his eyes upon it, whether he will or no: *The wicked are like a troubled Sea, and cannot rest, Isa. 57. 26.* They would wallow in sin without controul, but this inward principle will not suffer it; nothing can shelter men from those blows. What is the reason it could never be cried down? Man is an Enemy to his own disquiet; what man would continue upon the rack, if it were in his power to deliver himself? why have all human remedies been without success; and not able to extinguish those operations, though all the wickedness of the heart hath been ready to assist and second the attempt? It hath pursued men notwithstanding all the violence



used against it, and renewed its scourges with more severity, as men deal with their resisting Slaves. Man can as little silence those Thunders in his Soul, as he can the Thunders in the Heavens: He must strip himself of his humanity before he can be stript of an accusing and affrighting Conscience; It sticks as close to him as his nature: Since man cannot throw out the Process it makes against him, tis an evidence that some higher power secures its Throne and standing: Who should put this scourge into the hand of Conscience, which no man in the World is able to wrest out?

4. We may add, *the comfortable reflections of Conscience*. There are excusing as well as accusing reflections of Conscience, when things are done as works of the *law of nature*, Rom. 2. 15. As it doth not forbear to accuse and torture, when a wickedness though unknown to others is committed; So when a man hath done well, though he be attackt with all the calumnies the wit of man can forge, yet his Conscience justifies the action, and fills him with a singular contentment. As there is torture in sinning, so there is peace and joy in well doing: Neither of those it could do, if it did not understand a Sovereign Judge, who punishes the Rebels and rewards the well-doer. *Conscience* is the foundation of all Religion; and the two Pillars upon which it is built, are the *being* of God and the *bounty* of God to those that *diligently seek him*. \*

\* Heb. 11. 5.

This proves the *Existence of God*: If there were no God, Conscience were useless; the operations of it would have no foundation, if there were not an eye to take notice, and a hand to punish or reward the action. The accusations of Conscience evidence the Omniscience and the *Holiness* of God; The terrors of Conscience, the *justice* of God; The approbations of Conscience, the *Goodness* of God: All the order in the world owes it self, next to the Providence of God, to Conscience; Without it the world would be a *Golgotha*. As the Creatures witness, there was a first cause that produced them, so this Principle in man evidenceth it self to be set by the same hand, for the good of that which it had so framed: There could be no Conscience if there were no God, and man could not be a rational Creature, if there were no Conscience. As there is a *Rule* in us, there must be a *Judge* whether our actions be according to the rule. And since Conscience in our corrupted state is in some particular misled, there must be a power superior to Conscience to judge how it hath behaved it self, in its deputed office: We must come to some supream Judge, who can Judge Conscience it self. As a man can have no surer evidence, that he is a being, than because he thinks; he is a thinking being: So there is no surer evidence in nature, that there is a God, than that every man hath a natural principle in him, which continually cites him before God, and puts him in mind of him, and makes him one way or other fear him, and reflects upon him whether he will or no: A man hath less power over his Conscience, than over any other faculty: He may choose whether he will exercise his understanding about, or move his will to such an object, but he hath no such Authority over his Conscience; he cannot limit it, or cause it to cease from acting and reflecting; and therefore both that, and the law about which it acts, are settled by some supream Authority in the mind of man, and this is God.

*Fourthly, IV.* The evidence of a God results from the *vastness of desires in man*, and the real dissatisfaction he hath in every thing below himself. Man hath a boundless appetite after some Sovereign Good: As his understanding is more capacious, than any thing below, so is his Appetite larger. This affection of *desire* exceeds all other affections. Love is determined, to something known. Fear to something apprehended; but Desires approach nearer to Infiniteness, and pursue, not only what we know, or what we have a glimpse of; but what we find wanting in what we already enjoy. That which the desire of man is most naturally carryed after, is *Bonum*; some fully satisfying good. We desire knowledge by the sole impulse of reason; but we desire Good before the excitement of reason, and the desire is always after Good, but not always after Knowledge.

Now the Soul of man finds an imperfection in every thing here, and cannot scrape up a perfect satisfaction and felicity. In the highest fruitions of worldly things, tis still pursuing something else, which speaks a defect in what it already hath. The world may afford a felicity for our dust, the body, but not for the inhabitant in it; tis two mean for that. Is there any one Soul among the Sons of men, that



that can upon a due enquiry say, it was at rest and wanted no more, that hath not sometimes had desires after an immaterial Good? The Soul follows hard after such a thing, and hath frequent looks after it, *Psal.* 63. 8. Man desires a stable Good, but no sublunary thing is so: And he that doth not desire such a Good, wants the rational nature of a man: This is as natural as Understanding, Will and Conscience: Whence should the Soul of man have those desires? How came it to understand that something is still wanting to make its nature more perfect; if there were not in it some notion of a more perfect being, which can give it rest?

Can such a capacity be supposed to be in it without something in being able to satisfy it? If so, the noblest Creature in the world is miserablest and in a worse condition than any other: Other Creatures obtain their ultimate desires, *they are filled with good*, *Psal.* 104. 28. And shall man only have a vast desire without any possibility of enjoyment? Nothing in man is in vain: He hath objects for his affections, as well as affections for objects. Every Member of his body hath its end, and doth attain it. Every affection of his Soul hath an object, and that in this World, and shall there be none for his desire, which comes nearest to infinite of any affection planted in him? This boundless desire had not its original from man himself: Nothing would render it self restless; something above the bounds of this world implanted those desires after a higher Good, and made him restless in every thing else. And since the Soul can only rest in that which is infinite, there is something infinite for it to rest in: Since nothing in the world, though a man had the whole, can give it a satisfaction, there is something above the world only capable to do it, otherwise the Soul would be always without it, and be more in vain than any other Creature.

There is therefore some infinite being that can only give a contentment to the Soul, and *this is God*. And that goodness which implanted such desires in the Soul, would not do it to no purpose, and mock it in giving it an infinite desire of satisfaction, without intending it the pleasure of enjoyment, if it doth not by its own folly deprive it self of it. The felicity of human nature must needs exceed that which is allotted to other Creatures.

4. And *last Reason*. As 'tis a folly to deny that which all Nations in the World have consented to, which the frame of the world evidenceth, which man in his Body, Soul, Operations of Conscience witnesseth to: So 'tis a folly to deny the Being of God, which is witnessed unto by extraordinary occurrences in the world.

*Fourth Reason.*

1. In extraordinary Judgments. When a just revenge follows abominable crimes, especially when the Judgment is suted to the sin, by a strange Concatenation and succession of Providences, methodized to bring such a particular punishment; When the sin of a Nation or person is made legible in the inflicted Judgment, which testifies that it cannot be a casual thing. The Scripture gives us an account of the necessity of such Judgments, to keep up the reverential thoughts of God in the World. *Psal.* 9. 16. *The Lord is known by the judgment which he executes, the wicked is snared in the work of his own hand.* And Jealousy is the name of God, *Exod.* 34. 14. *Whose name is Jealous*: He is distinguished from false Gods by the Judgments which he sends, as men are by their names.

Extraordinary Prodigies in many Nations have been the Heralds of extraordinary Judgments, and presages of the particular Judgments which afterwards they have felt, of which the *Roman* Histories, and others are full. That there are such things is undeniable, and that the events have been answerable to the threatening, unless we will throw away all human Testimonies, and count all the Histories of the World Forgeries. Such things are evidences of some invisible Power which orders those affairs. And if there be invisible Powers, there is also an efficacious cause which moves them: A Government certainly there is among them, as well as in the world, and then we must come to some supream Governour which presides over them.

Judgments upon notorious offenders have been evident in all ages; The Scripture gives many instances. I shall only mention that of *Herod Agrippa*, which *Josephus* mentions. \* He receives the flattering applause of the people, and thought himself a God. But by the suddain stroak upon him, was forced by his torture to confess another. *I am God* saith he in your account, but a higher calls me away: The

\* *Lib.* 19. *Antiq.*  
*Act.* 12. 21.  
22. 23.

Will



*will of the Heavenly Deity is to be endured. The Angel of the Lord smote him. The Judgment here was suited to the sin; he that would be a God is catcht up of Worms, the vilest Creatures. Tully Hostilius, a Roman King, who counted it the most unroyal thing to be Religious, or own any other God but his Sword, was consumed himself and his whole House by Lightning from Heaven.*

Many things are unaccountable unless we have recourse to God: The strange Revelations of Murderers, that have most secretly committed their crimes: The making good some dreadful imprecations, which some wretches have used to confirm a lie, and immediatly have been struck with that Judgement they wished: The raising often unexpected persons to be instruments of Vengeance on a sinful and perfidious Nation: The overturning the deepest and surest Counsels of men, when they have had a successful progress and came to the very point of execution; the whole designe of mens preservation hath been beaten in peices by some unforeseen circumstance, so that Judgments have broken in upon them without controul, and all their subtilties been out-witted. The strange crossing of some in their Estates, though the most wise, industrious and frugal persons, and that by strange and unexpected wayes: And it is observable how often every thing contributes to carry on a Judgment intended, as if they rationally designed it. All those loudly proclaim a God in the world: If there were no God, there would be no sin; if no sin, there would be no punishment.

2. *In Miracles.* The course of nature is uniforme; and when it is put out of its course, it must be by some superior power invisible to the world; and by whatsoever invisible instruments they are wrought, the efficacy of them must depend upon some first cause above nature. *Psal. 72. 18. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things,* by himself and his sole power.

That which cannot be the result of a natural cause, must be the result of something supernatural: What is beyond the reach of nature, is the effect of a power superior to nature. For it is quite against the order of nature, and is the elevation of something to such a pitch, which all nature could not advance it to. Nature cannot go beyond its own limits: If it be determined by another, as hath been formerly proved, it cannot lift it self above it self, without that power, that so determined it. Natural agents act necessarily: The Sun doth necessarily shine, fire doth necessarily burn. That cannot be the result of nature, which is above the Ability of nature. That cannot be the work of nature, which is against the order of nature: Nature cannot do any thing against it self, or invert its own course.

We must own that such things have been, or we must accuse all the Records of former ages to be a pack of lies; which whosoever doth, destroys the greatest and best part of human knowledge. The Miracles mentioned in the Scripture, wrought by our Saviour, are acknowledged by the *Heathen*, by the *Jews* at this day, though his greatest enemies. There is no dispute whether such things were wrought, the *dead raised*, the *blind restored to sight*. The Heathens have acknowledged the Miraculous Eclipse of the Sun, at the Passion of Christ, quite against the rule of nature, the Moon being then in opposition to the Sun. The propagation of Christianity contrary to the methods whereby other Religions have been propagated, that in a few years the Nations of the world should be sprinkled with this Doctrine, and give in a greater Catalogue of Martyrs courting the devouring flames, than all the Religions of the world.

To this might be added, the strange hand that was over the *Jews*, the only people in the world professing the true God, that should so often be befriended by their Conquerors, so as to rebuild their Temple, though they were looked upon as a people apt to rebel. *Dion* and *Seneca* observe, that wherever they were transplanted, they prospered and gave laws to the Victors: So that this proves also the Authority of the Scripture, the truth of Christian Religion, as well as the being of a God, and a superior power over the world.

To this might be added, the bridling the tumultuous passions of men for the preservation of human societies, which else would run the world into unconceivable confusions, *Psal. 65. 7. Which stilleth the noise of the Sea, and the tumults of the people.* As also the Miraculous deliverance of a person or Nation, when



when upon the very brink of ruin ; The suddain answer of Prayer when God hath been sought to, and the turning away a Judgment, which in reason could not be expected to be averted, and the raising a sunk people from a ruine which seemed inevitable, by unexpected ways.

3. *Accomplishments of Prophecies.* Those things which are purely contingent, and cannot be known by Natural signs and in their causes, as Eccipses and changes in Nations, which may be discerned by an observation of the signs of the times ; such things that fall not within this compais, if they be foretold and come to pass, are solely from some higher hand, and above the cause of Nature. This in Scripture is asserted to be a notice of the true God, Isa. 41. 23. *Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are God,* and Isa. 46. 10. *I am God declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying my Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.* And Prophecy was consented to by all the Philosophers to be from Divine illumination : That power which discovers things future, which all the foresight of men cannot kenn and conjecture, is above nature. And to foretel them so certainly as if they did already exist, or had existed long ago, must be the result of a mind infinitely intelligent : Because it is the highest way of knowing, and a higher cannot be imagined : And he that knows things future in such a manner, must needs know things present and past. Cyrus was Prophesied of by *Esay. ch. 44. 28. & 45. 1.* long before he was born : His Victories, Spoils, all that should happen in *Babylon*, his bounty to the *Jews* came to pass, according to that Prophecy ; and the sight of that Prophecy which the *Jews* shewed him, as other Historians report, was that which moved him to be favourable to the *Jews*.

*Alexanders* sight of *Daniels* Prophecy concerning his Victories moved him to spare *Jerusalem*. And are not the four *Monarchies* plainly deciphered in that Book, before the fourth rose up in the world ? That power which foretells things beyond the reach of the wit of man, and orders all causes to bring about those predictions, must be an infinite power, the same that made the world, sustains it and governs all things in it according to his pleasure, and to bring about his own ends ; And this Being is God.

1. If Atheism be a folly ; *Tis then pernicious to the World, and to the Atheist himself.* Wisdom is the band of human societies, the glory of Man. Folly is the disturber of Families, Cites, Nations : The disgrace of human nature.

First, I. *Tis pernicious to the World.*

1. *It would root out the foundations of Government.* It demolisheth all order in Nations. The being of a God is the guard of the world : The sense of a God is the foundation of Civil order ; without this there is no tye upon the Consciences of men. What force would there be in Oaths for the decisions of controversies, what right could there be in Appeals made to one that had no being ? A City of Atheists would be a heap of confusion ; there could be no ground of any commerce, when all the sacred bands of it in the Consciences of men were snapt asunder, which are torne to peices and utterly destroyed by denying the Existence of God : What Magistrate could be secure in his standing, what private person could be secure in his right ? \* Can that then be a truth that is destructive of all publick good ? If the Atheists sentiment, that there were no God, were a truth ; and the contrary that there were a God, were a falsity ; It would then follow, that falsity made men good and serviceable to one another : That error were the foundation of all the beauty and order and outward felicity of the world ; the fountain of all good to man. If there were no God, to believe there is one, would be an error, and to beleive there is none would be the greatest wisdom, because it would be the greatest truth. And then as it is the greatest wisdom to fear God, upon the apprehension of his Existence ; \* So it would be the greatest error to fear him, if there were none. It would unquestionably follow, that Error is the support of the world, the spring of all human advantages ; and that every part of the world were obliged to a falsity for being a quiet habitation, which is the most absur'd thing to imagine. Tis a thing impossible to be tolerated by any Prince, without laying an Axe to the root of the Government.

2. *It would introduce all evil into the World.* If you take away God, you take away

\* Lessius de Provid. p. 654.

\* Psal. 111. 10.



way Conscience, and thereby all measures and rules of good and evil. And how could any Laws be made when the measure and standard of them were removed? All good Laws are founded upon the dictates of Conscience and reason, upon common sentiments in human nature, which spring from a sense of God: So that if the foundation be demolisht, the whole superstructure must tumble down: A man might be a Thief, a Murderer, an Adulterer, and could not in a strict sense be an offender. The worst of actions could not be evil, if a man were a God to himself, a Law to himself. Nothing but evil deserves a Censure, and nothing would be evil, if there were no God, the Rector of the world against whom evil is properly committed: No man can makethat morally evil that is not so in it self. As where there is a faint sense of God, the heart is more strongly inclin'd to wickedness; so where there is no sense of God, the bars are removed, the flood-gates set open for all wickedness to rush in upon mankind. Religion pinions men from abominable practices, and restrains them from being Slaves to their own passions: An Atheists arms would be loose to do any thing. \* Nothing so villanous and unjust but would be Acted if the natural fear of a Deity were extinguishd. The first consequence issuing from the apprehension of the *Existence of God*, is his Government of the world. If there be no God, then the natural consequence is that there is no supream Government of the world: Such a Notion would cashier all sentiments of good, and be like a *Trojan Horse*, whence all impurity, tyranny and all sorts of mischeifs would break out upon mankind: Corruption and abominable works in the text are the fruit of the fools perswasion that there is no God. The perverting the ways of men, oppression and extortion owe their rise to a forgetfulness of God. Jer. 3. 21. *They have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God.* Ezek. 22. 12. *Thou hast greedily gained by extortion and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord.* The whole Earth would be filled with violence, all flesh would corrupt their way, as it was before the deluge, when probably Atheism did abound more than Idolatry; and if not a disowning the being, yet denying the Providence of God by the posterity of *Cain*: Those of the Family of *Seth* only calling upon the name of the Lord, Gen. 6. 11. 12. compared, which Gen. 4. 26.

\* Lessius de  
Provid. p. 654.

The greatest sense of a Deity in any, hath been attended with the greatest innocence of life and usefulness to others: And a weaker sense hath been attended with a baser impurity. \* If there were no God, Blasphemy would be praise-worthy: As the reproach of Idols is praise-worthy, because we testifie that there is no Divinity in them. What can be more contemptible than that which hath no being? Sin would be only a false opinion of a violated Law, and an offended Deity. If such apprehensions prevail, what a wide door is opened to the worst of villanies? If there be no God, no respect is due to him; all the Religion in the world is a trifle, and Error, and thus the Pillars of all human society, and that which hath made Common-wealths to flourish, are blown away.

\* Lessius de  
Provid. p. 655.

Secondly, 2: *Tis pernicious to the Atheist himself.* If he fear no future punishment, he can never expect any future reward: All his hopes must be confined to a Swinish and despicable manner of life, without any imaginations of so much as a dram of reserved hapiness. He is in a worse condition than the silliest animal, which hath something to please it in its life: Whereas an *Atheist* can have nothing hereto give him a full content, no more than any other man in the World, and can have less satisfaction hereafter. He deposeth the noble end of his own being, which was to serve a God and have a satisfaction in him, to seek a God and be rewarded by him: And he that departs from his end, recedes from his own nature. All the content any Creature finds, is in performing its end, moving according to its natural instinct: As it is a joy to the *Sun* to run its race: \* In the same manner it is a satisfaction to every other Creature, and its delight to observe the Law of its Creation. What content can any man have that runs from his end, opposeth his own nature, denies a God by whom and for whom he was Created, whose Image he bears, which is the Glory of his nature; and sinks into the very, dregs of brutishness? How elegantly is it described by *Bildad*, \* *his own Counsel shall cast him down, terrors shall make him afraid on every side, destruction shall be ready at his side, the first born of Death shall devour his strength, his confidence shall be rooted*

\* Psal. 19. 5.

\* Job. 18. 7. 8.  
Etc. to the end.

out,



cut, and it shall bring him to the King of Terrors: Brimstone shall be scattered upon his Habitation, he shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the World; they that come after him shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were affrighted: and this is the place of him that knows not God. \* If there be a future reckoning, (as his own Conscience cannot but sometimes inform him of) his condition is desperate, and his misery dreadful and unavoidable: Tis not righteous a Hell should entertain any else, if it refuse him. \* Ver. 21.

2. How lamentable is it, that in our times this folly of Atheism should be so rife? Use 2. That there should be found such Monsters in human nature, in the midst of the improvements of Reason, and shinings of the Gospel, who not only make the Scripture the matter of their Jeers, but Scoff at the Judgments and Providences of God in the World, and envy their Creator a being, without whose goodness they had had none themselves; who contradict in their carriage what they assert to be their sentiment, when they dreadfully imprecate damnation to themselves? Whence should that damnation they so rashly wish, be poured forth upon them, if there were not a revenging God? Formerly Atheism was as rare as prodigious, scarce two or three known in an age. \* And those that are reported to be so in former ages, are rather thought to be counted so, for mocking at the fenceless Deities, the common people ador'd, and laying open their impurities. A meer natural strength would easily discover that those they adored for Gods, could not deserve that title, since their original was known, their uncleanness manifest and acknowledged by their worshippers. And probably it was so, \* since the Christians were termed *idolaters*, because they acknowledged not their vain Idols. \* As Justin in *1st* *apolog.*

I question whether there ever was, or can be in the world, an uninterrupted and internal denial of the being of God, or that men, (unless we can suppose Conscience utterly dead) can arrive to such a degree of impiety: For before they can stifle such sentiments in them, (whatsoever they may assert) they must be utter strangers to the common conceptions of reason, and despoile themselves of their own humanity. He that dares to deny a God with his lips, yet sets up something or other as a God in his heart. Is it not lamentable that this sacred truth, consented to by all Nations, which is the band of civil societies, the source of all order in the world, should be denied with a bare face, and disputed against in Companies; And the Glory of a wise Creator ascribed to an unintelligent nature, to blind chance? are not such worse then Heathens? They worshipped many Gods, these none: They preserved a notion of God in the world under a disguise of Images: These would banish him both from Earth and Heaven, and demolish the Statues of him in their own Consciences: They degraded him, these would destroy him: They coupled Creatures with him; *Rom 1. 25. Who worshipped the Creature with the Creator,* as it may most properly be rendered: And these would make him worse than the Creature, a meer nothing. Earth is hereby become worse than Hell. Atheism is a persuasion, which finds no footing any where else. Hell that receives such persons, in this point reforms them: They can never deny or doubt of his being, while they feel his strokes. The Devil that rejoices at their wickedness, knows them to be in an error; for he *believes and trembles at the belief.* \* This is a forerunner of Judgment: Boldness in sin is a preface of vengeance, especially when the honour of God is more particularly concern'd therein. It tends to the overturning human society, taking off the Bridle from the wicked inclinations of men. And God appears not in such visible Judgments against sin immediately committed against himself, as in the case of those sins that are destructive to human society. Besides, God as Governor of the world will uphold that, without which all his ordinances in the world would be useless. *Atheism* is point blank against all the Glory of God in Creation, and against all the glory of God in Redemption, and pronounceth at one breath, both the Creator, and all Acts of Religion and Divine Institutions useless and insignificant. *Jan. 2. 15.*

Since most have had one time or other, some risings of doubt, whether there be a God, tho few do in expressions deny his being, it may not be unnecessary to propose somethings for the further impressing this truth, and guarding themselves against such temptations.

1. Tis utterly impossible to demonstrate there is no God. He can choose no Medium,



dium, but will fall in as a proof for his Existence, and a manifestation of his excellency, rather than against it. The pretences of the Atheist are so ridiculous, that they are not worth the mentioning.

They never saw God, and therefore know not how to believe such a Being: they cannot comprehend him. He would not be God, if he could fall within the narrow Model of an humane Understanding: He would not be infinite, if he were comprehensible, or to be terminated by our sight. How small a thing must that be which is seen by a bodily Eye, or graspt by a weak Mind? If God were visible or comprehensible, he would be limited: Shall it be a sufficient Demonstration from a blind man, that there is no fire in the Room, because he sees it not, though he feel the warmth of it? The knowledge of the effect is sufficient to conclude the existence of the cause. Who ever saw his own Life? Is it sufficient to deny a man lives, because he beholds not his Life, and only knows it by his motion? He never saw his own Soul, but knows he hath one by his thinking power: The Air renders it self sensible to Men in its Operations, yet was never seen by the eye.

If God should render Himself visible, they might question as well as now, whether that which was so visible, were God or some delusion. If he should appear glorious, we can as little behold him in his Majestick Glory, as an Owl can behold the Sun in its brightness; we should still but see him in his Effects, as we do the Sun by his Beams. If he should shew a new Miracle, we should still see him but by his Works; so we see him in his Creatures, every one of which would be as great a Miracle as any can be wrought, to one that had the first prospect of them. To require to see God, is to require that which is impossible, 1 Tim. 6. 16. *Hedwels in the Light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see.* 'Tis visible that he is, *for he covers himself with Light as with a Garment*, Psal. 104. 2. 'Tis invisible what he is, *for he makes Darknes his secret place*, Psal. 18. 11. Nothing more clear to the Eye than Light, and nothing more difficult to the understanding than the nature of it: as Light is the first Object obvious to the Eye, so is God the first Object obvious to the Understanding. The Arguments from Nature do with greater strength evince his Existence, than any pretences can manifest there is no God. No man can assure himself by any good reason there is none: For as for the *likeness of Events* to him that is *righteous* and him that is *wicked*, to him that *sacrificeth* and to him that *sacrificeth* not, Eccles. 9. 2. It is an Argument for a reserve of Judgment in another State, which every mans Conscience dictates to him; when the Justice of God shall be glorified in another world, as much as his Patience is in this.

2. *Whosoever doubts of it, makes himself a Mark, against which all the Creatures fight.*

All the Stars fought against *Sisera* for *Israel*: All the Stars in Heaven, and the Dust on Earth fight for God against the Atheist. He hath as many Arguments against him as there are Creatures in the whole compass of Heaven and Earth: He is most unreasonable, that denies or doubts of that whose Image and Shadow he sees round about him; he may sooner deny the Sun that warms him, the Moon that in the Night walks in her brightness, deny the Fruits he enjoys from the Earth, yea and, deny that he doth exist. He must tear his own Conscience, fly from his own Thoughts, be changed into the nature of a Stone which hath neither reason nor sense, before he can disengage himself from those Arguments which evince the Being of a God. He that would make the natural Religion professed in the world a meer Romance, must give the lye to the common sense of Mankind; he must be at an irreconcilable enmity with his own Reason, resolve to hear nothing that it speaks, if he will not hear what it speaks in this case, with a greater evidence than it can ascertain any thing else. God hath so settled himself in the reason of Man, that he must vilify the noblest Faculty God hath given him, and put off Nature it self before he can blot out the Notion of a God.

3. No question but *those that have been so bold as to deny that there was a God, have sometimes been much afraid they have been in an Error, and have at least suspected there was a God, when some suddain Prodigy hath presented it self to them and roused their fears.* And whatsoever Sentiments they might have in their blinding Prosperity, they have had other kind of motions in them in their stormy afflictions: and like *Jonah's* Mariners have been ready to cry to him for help, whom they disdained to own so much as in being, while they swam in their pleasures. The thoughts of a Deity cannot be so extinguishd, but they will revive and rush upon a Man, at least under some sharp



affliction. Amazing judgments will make them question their own apprehensions. God sends some Messengers to keep alive the apprehension of him as a Judge, while men resolve not to own or reverence him as a Governour. A man cannot but keep a scent of what was born with him. As a vessel that hath been seasoned first with a strong juice will preserve the scent of it, whatsoever liquors are afterwards put into it.

4. *What is it for which such men rack their wits, to form Notions, that there is no God?* Is it not that they would indulge some vicious habit, which hath gained the possession of their Soul, which they know cannot be favoured by that holy God, whose Notion they would raze out\*? Is it not for some brutish affection, as degenerative of human Nature, as derogatory to the Glory of God; a lust as unmanly as sinful?

\* Psal. 94. 6. 7.

The terrors of God are the effects of guilt; and therefore men would wear out the apprehensions of a Deity, that they might be brutish without controul. They would fain believe there were no God, that they might not be men, but beasts. How great a folly is it to take so much pains in vain, for a slavery and torment; to cast off that which they call a yoke, for that which really is one! There is more pains and toughness of Soul requisite to shake off the apprehensions of God, than to believe that he is, and cleave constantly to him. What a madness is it in any to take so much pains to be less than a man, by razing out the apprehensions of God, when with less pains, he may be more than an earthly man, by cherishing the notions of God, and walking answerably thereunto.

5. *How unreasonable is it for any man to hazard himself at this rate in the denial of a God?* The Atheist saith he knows not that there is a God; but may he not reasonably think, there may be one for ought he knows? and if there be, what a desperate confusion will he be in, when all his bravado's shall prove false? What can they gain by such an Opinion? a freedom say they from the burdensome yoke of Conscience, a liberty to do what they list: that doth not subject them to Divine Laws. 'Tis an hard matter to perswade any that they can gain this. They can gain but a sordid pleasure, unworthy the Nature of Man. But it were well, that such would argue thus with themselves: If there be a God, and I fear and obey him, I gain a happy Eternity; but if there be no God, I lose nothing but my sordid lusts by firmly believing there is one. If I be deceived at last, and find a God, can I think to be rewarded by him, for disowning him? Do not I run a desperate hazard to lose his favour, his Kingdom and endless felicity, for an endless torment? By confessing a God I venture no loss; but by denying him I run the most desperate hazard, if there be one.

He is not a reasonable Creature, that will not put himself upon such a reasonable arguing.

What a doleful meeting will there be between the God who is denied, and the Atheist that denies him, who shall meet with reproaches on Gods part, and terrors on his own? All that he gains is a liberty to defile himself here, and a certainty to be despised hereafter, if he be in an error, as undoubtedly he is.

6. *Can any such person say he hath done all that he can to inform himself of the being of God, or of other things which he denies?* Or rather they would fain imagine there is none, that they may sleep securely in their lusts and be free (if they could) from the thunder-claps of Conscience? Can such say they have used their utmost endeavours to instruct themselves in this, and can meet with no satisfaction? Were it an abstruse Truth it might not be wondred at: but not to meet with satisfaction in this which every thing minds us of, and helpeth, is the fruit of an extream negligence, stupidity, and a willingness to be unsatisfied, and a judicial process of God against them. 'Tis strange any man should be so dark in that upon which depends the conduct of his life, and the expectation of happiness hereafter.

I do not know what some of you may think, but I believe these things are not useless to be proposed for our selves to answer temptations: We know not what wicked temptation in a debauched and sceptick Age, meeting with a corrupt heart, may prompt men to: And tho there may not be any Atheist here present, yet I know there is more than one, who have accidentally met with such, who openly denied a Deity. And if the like occasion happen, these considerations may not be



unfitful to apply to their Consciences. But I must confess, that since those that live in this sentiment, do not judge themselves worthy of their own care, they are not worthy of the care of others; and a man must have all the Charity of the Christian Religion, which they despise, not to condemn them, and leave them to their own folly. As we are to pity mad men, who sink under an unavoidable distemper, we are as much to abominate them, who willfully hug this prodigious frenzy.

Use 3.

If it be the Atheists folly to deny or doubt of the being of God, *'Tis our wisdom to be firmly settled in this Truth, That God is.* We should never be without our Arms in an Age wherein Atheism appears bare faced without a disguise.

You may meet with suggestions to it; though the Devil formerly never attempted to demolish this notion in the World, but was willing to keep it up, so the worship due to God might run in his own Channel; and was necessitated to preserve it, without which he could not have erected that Idolatry, which was his great design in opposition to God: yet since the Foundations of that are torn up, and never like to be rebuilt, he may endeavour, as his last refuge, to banish the Notion of God out of the World; that he may reign as absolutely without it, as he did before by the mistakes about the divine Nature. But we must not lay all upon Satan; the corruption of our own hearts ministers matter to such Sparks. 'Tis not said Satan hath suggested to the Fool, but *the Fool hath said in his heart* there is no God. But let them come from what principle soever, silence them quickly, give them their due; oppose the whole Scheme of Nature to fight against them, as the Stars did against *Sihon*. Stir up sentiments of Conscience to oppose sentiments of corruption. Resolve sooner to believe, that your selves are not, than that God is not: And if you suppose they at any time come from Satan, object to him that you know he believes the contrary, to what he suggests. Settle this principle

\* Heb. 11. 27.

firmly in you, *let us behold Him that is invisible, as Moses did:* \* Let us have the sentiments following upon the Notion of a God; to be restrained by a fear of him, excited by a love to him, not to violate his Laws and offend his Goodness. He is not a God careless of our actions, negligent to inflict punishment, and bestow rewards, *he forgets not the labor of our love,* \* nor the integrity of our ways: He were not a God, if he were not a Governor: And punishments and rewards are as essential to Government, as a Foundation to a building: His being and his Government in rewarding, which implies punishment, (*for the neglects of him are linked together,*) \* are not to be separated in our thoughts of him.

\* Heb. 6. 10.

\* Heb. 11. 5.

1. *Without this truth fixed in us, we can never give him the worship due to his Name.* When the knowledge of any thing is fluctuating and uncertain, our actions about it are careless. We regard not that which we think doth not much concern us. If we do not firmly believe there is a God, we shall pay him no steady worship; and if we believe not the excellency of his nature, we shall offer him but a slight service. \* The Jews \* call the knowledge of the being of God, The Foundation and Pillar of wisdom. The whole frame of Religion is dissolved without this apprehension, and totters if this apprehension be wavering. Religion in the heart is as water in a weather glass which riseth or falls according to the strength or weakness of this belief: How can any man worship that which he believes not to be, or doubts of? Could any man omit the paying a homage to one, whom he did believe to be an Omnipotent, Wise Being, possessing, (infinitely above our conceptions) the perfections of all Creatures? He must either think there is no such being, or that he is an easy drowsy inobservant God, and not such a one as our natural Notions of him, if listened to, as well as the Scripture, represents him to be.

\* Mal. 1. 12. 14.  
\* Maimon. fundam.  
Legis cap. 1.

2. *Without being rooted in this, we cannot order our lives.* All our baseness, stupidity, dulness, wandrings, vanity spring from a wavering and unsettledness in this principle. This gives ground to brutish pleasures, not only to solicit, but conquer us. *Abraham* expected violence in any place where God was not owned, Gen. 20. 11. *Surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will slay me for my Wife's sake.* The natural knowledge of God firmly impressed, would choak that which would stifle our reason and deface our Souls. The belief that God is, and what he is, would have a mighty influence to persuade us to a real Religion, and serious Consideration, and casting about how to be like to him and united with him.

3. *Without it we cannot have any comfort of our Lives.* Who would willingly live



In a stormy world, void of a God? If we waver in this Principle, to whom should we make our complaints in our afflictions? Where should we meet with supports? How could we satisfy our selves with the hopes of a future Happiness? There is a Sweetness in the Meditation of his Existence, and that *he is a Creator*. \* Thoughts of other things have a Bitterness mixed with them: Houses, Lands, Children now are, shortly they will not be; but *God is*, that made the World: His Faithfulness as he is a Creator, is a Ground to *deposit our Souls* and Concerns in *our innocent Sufferings*. \* So far as we are weak in the acknowledgment of God, we deprive our selves of our content in the view of his infinite perfections. \* *Psalm 1. 4. 24.* \* *1 Pet. 4. 19.*

4. *Without the rooting of this Principle, we cannot have a firm belief of Scripture.* The Scripture will be a slight thing to one that hath weak sentiments of God. The Belief of a God must necessarily precede the Belief of any Revelation; The latter cannot take place without the former as the foundation. We must firmly believe the Being of a God, wherein our Happiness doth consist, before we can believe any means which conduct us to him: *Moses* begins with the Author of Creation, before he treats of the Promise of Redemption. *Paul* preached *God as a Creator* to a University, before he preached *Christ as Mediator*. \* What influence can the Testimony of God have in his Revelation upon one that doth not firmly assent to the truth of his Being? All would be in vain that is so often repeated [ *thus saith the Lord* ] if we do not believe there is a Lord that speaks it. There could be no awe from his Sovereignty in his Commands, nor any comfortable taste of his Goodness in his Promises. The more we are strengthened in this Principle, the more credit we shall be able to give to divine Revelation, to rest in his Promise, and to reverence his Precept; the Authority of all depends upon the Being of the Revealer. \* *Acts 17. 24.*

To this purpose, since we have handled this discourse by natural Arguments,

1. *Study God in the Creatures as well as in the Scriptures.* The primary use of the Creatures, is to acknowledge God in them; they were made to be witnesses of himself and his Goodness, and Heralds of his Glory, which Glory of God as Creator shall endure for ever, *Psalm 104. 31.* that whole *Psalms* is a Lecture of Creation and Providence. The World is a sacred Temple; Man is introduced to contemplate it, and behold with Praise the Glory of God in the pieces of his Art. As Grace doth not destroy Nature, so the Book of Redemption blots not out that of Creation: Had he not shewn himself in his Creatures, he could never have shewn himself in his Christ: The order of things required it. God must be read where ever he is legible; The Creatures are one book, wherein he hath writ a part of the excellency of his name, \* as many Artists do in their Works and Watches. Gods Glory like the Filings of Gold is too precious to be lost where ever it drops: Nothing so vile and base in the World, but carries in it an instruction for Man, and drives in further the Notion of a God. As he find of his Cottage; Enter here, *Sunt hic etiam Dei*, God disdains not this place: So the least Creature speaks to Man, every Shrub in the Field, every Fly in the Air, every Limb in a Body; consider me, God disdains not to appear in me; he hath discovered in me his Being and a part of his Skill, as well as in the highest. The Creatures manifest the Being of God and part of his Perfections. We have indeed a more excellent way, a Revelation setting him forth in a more excellent manner, a firmer Object of Dependence, a brighter Object of Love, raising our hearts from self confidence to a confidence in him. Though the appearance of God in the one be clearer than in the other, yet neither is to be neglected: The Scripture directs us to Nature to view God; it had been in vain else for the Apostle to make use of natural Arguments: Nature is not contrary to Scripture, nor Scripture to Nature; unless we should think God contrary to himself, who is the Author of both. \* *Psalm 8. 2.*

2. *View God in your own experiences of him.* There is a taste and sight of his Goodness, though no sight of his Essence. \* By the taste of his Goodness you may know the reality of the fountain, whence it springs and from whence it flows: This surpasseth the greatest Capacity of a meer natural Understanding. Experience of the sweetness of the ways of Christianity is a mighty preservative against Atheism. Many a Man knows not how to prove Honey to be sweet by his reason, but by his sense; and if all the reason in the world be brought against it, he will not be reasoned out of what he tastes. \* *Psalm 34. 58.*

Have not many found the delightful illappes of God into their Souls, often sprinkled



led with his inward blessings upon their seeking of him; had secret warnings in their approaches to him; and gentle rebukes in their Consciences upon their swerings from him? Have not many found sometimes an invisible hand raising them up when they were dejected; some unexpected providence stepping in for their relief; and easily perceived that it could not be a work of chance, nor many times the intention of the instruments he hath used in it? You have often found that he is, by finding that he is a rewarder, and can set to your seals that he is what he hath declared himself to be in his word, Isa. 43. 12. *I have declared, and have saved, therefore you are my witnesses saith the Lord that I am God.* The secret touches of God upon the heart and inward converses with him are a greater evidence of the Existence of a supream and infinitely good being, than all nature.

Use 4.

4. Is it a folly to deny or doubt of the being of God? *Tis a folly also not to worship God, when we acknowledge his Existence:* Tis our Wisdom then to Worship him. As it is not indifferent whether we believe there is a God or no: So it is not indifferent whether we will give Honour to that God or no. A worship is his right as he is the Author of our being, and fountain of our happiness. By this only we acknowledge his Deity: Tho we may profess his being, yet we deny that profession in neglects of worship. To deny him a Worship is as a great folly, as to deny his being. He that renounceth all homage to his Creator, envies him the being which he cannot deprive him of. The natural inclination to worship is as universal as the Notion of a God; Idolatry else had never gained footing in the world. *The Existence of God* was never owned in any Nation, but a Worship of him was appointed. And many people who have turned their backs upon some other parts of the Law of nature, have paid a continual homage to some superior and invisible being. The *Jews* give a Reason why Man was Created in the Evening of the Sabbath, because he should begin his being with the worship of his Maker. As soon as ever he found himself to be a Creature, his first solemn act, should be a particular respect to his Creator. \* *To fear God and keep his Commandment, is the whole of man, or is* \* whole man; he is not a man but a beast, without observance of God. Religion is as requisite as reason to compleat a man: He were not reasonable if he were not Religious; because by neglecting Religion, he neglects the chiefest dictate of reason. Either God framed the world with so much Order, Elegancy, and variety to no purpose, or this was his end at least, that reasonable Creatures should admire him in it, and Honour him for it. The Notion of God was not stamp'd upon men, the shadows of God did not appear in the Creatures, to be the Subject of an idle contemplation, but the motive of a due homage to God: He Created the world for his glory, a people for himself, that he might have the Honour of his works: That since we *live and move in him and by him*, we should live and move to him and for him. It was the condemnation of the Heathen world, that when they *knew* there was a God, they did *not give him the Glory* due to him. \* He that denies his being is an Atheist to his essence: He that denies his worship is an Atheist to his Honour.

\* Eccl. 12.

\* Heb.

\* Rom. 1. 21.

\* Pro. 4. 23.

5. If it be a folly to deny the being of God, *It will be our Wisdom then, since we acknowledge his being, often to think of him.* Thoughts are the first issue of a Creature as reasonable: \* He that hath given us the faculty whereby we are able to think, should be the principal object about which the power of it should be exercised. Tis a Justice to God the Author of our understandings, a Justice to the nature of our understandings, that the noblest faculty should be employed about the most excellent object. Our minds are a beam from God; and therefore, as the Beams of the Sun, when they touch the Earth, should reflect back upon God: As we seem to deny the being of God, not to think of him; we seem also to unsoul our Souls, in misemploying the activity of them any other way: like Flies to be oftner on Dunghills than Flowers.

Tis made the black mark of an ungodly Man or an Atheist, that *God is not in all his thoughts*, Psal. 10. 4. What comfort can be had in the being of God without thinking of him with Reverence and delight? A God forgotten is as good as no God to us.

Practical



A  
DISCOURSE  
UPON  
PRACTICAL  
ATHEISM.

Psalm 14. 1.

Doct. 2. **P**RACTICAL *Atheism is natural to Man in his depraved state, and very frequent in the hearts and lives of Men.*

*The Fool hath said in his heart there is no God.* He regards him as little as if he had no being: He said in his heart, not with his tongue, nor in his head: He never firmly thought it, nor openly asserted it: Shame put a Bar to the first, and natural reason to the second. Yet perhaps he had sometimes some doubts whether there were a God or no: He wished there were not any, and sometimes hoped there were none at all: He could not rase out the Notion of a Deity in his mind, but he neglected the fixing the sence of God in his heart, and made it too much his business to deface and blot out those Characters of God in his Soul, which had been left under the ruines of original nature.

Men may have Atheistical hearts without Atheistical heads. Their reasons may defend the Notion of a Deity, while their hearts are empty of affection to the Deity: *Jobs Children may curse God in their hearts, tho not with their lips.* \*

\* Job. 1. 5.

*There is no God.* Most understand it of a denial of the Providence of God; as I have said in opening the former Doctrine.

He denies some essential Attribute of God, or the exercise of that Attribute in the world. \*

He that denies any essential Attribute, may be said to deny the being of God. Whosoever denies Angels or men to have Reason and Will, denies the human and Angelical nature, because Understanding and Will are essential to both those Natures; there could neither be Angel nor Man without them. No Nature can subsist without the perfections essential to that Nature, nor God be conceived of without His: The *Apostle* tells us, *Eph. 2. 12.* that the *Gentiles* were *without God in the World*: So in some sence all unbelievers may be termed *Atheists*; for rejecting the Mediator appointed by God, they reject that God who appointed him.

But this is beyond the intended scope; Natural Atheism being the only subject: Yet this is deducible from it. That the title of *ἄθεος*, doth not only belong to those who deny the Existence of God, or to those who condemn all sence of a Deity, and would root the Conscience and Reverence of God out of their Souls: But

\* So the Chalde reads. לית שולטא Non potestas, denying the authority of God in the world.



it belongs also to these who give not that Worship to God which is due to him: Who Worship many Gods, or who Worship one God in a false and superstitious manner; when they have not right conceptions of God, nor intend an adoration of him according to the excellency of his Nature: All those that are unconcerned for any particular Religion, fall under this Character. Though they own a God in general, yet are willing to acknowledge any God that shall be coined by the powers under whom they live. The *Gentiles* were without God in the world; without the true Notion of God, not without a God of their own framing.

This general or practical Atheism is natural to men.

1. *Not natural by Created, but by corrupted Nature*: 'Tis against nature, as nature came out of the hand of God: But universally natural, as nature hath been sophisticated and infected by the Serpents breath. Inconsideration of God, or misrepresentations of his nature, are as agreeable to corrupt nature, as the disowning the being of a God is contrary to common reason. God is not denied *natura, sed citius*.

\* Augustin de  
Civ. Dei.

2. *'Tis universally natural*: The wicked are estranged from the Womb, Psa. 58. 3. They go astray as soon as they be born, their poison is like the poison of a Serpent. The wicked: And who by his birth hath a better title? They go astray from the dictates of God and the rule of their Creation as soon as ever they be born; Their poison is like the poison of a Serpent, which is radically the same in all of the same species. 'Tis seminally and fundamentally in all men, though there may be a stronger restraint by a Divine hand upon some men, than upon others. This principle runs through the whole stream of Nature. The natural bent of every mans heart is distant from God: When we attempt any thing pleasing to God, 'tis like the climbing up a Hill, against nature; when any thing is displeasing to him, 'tis like a Current running down the Channel in its natural course: When we attempt any thing that is an acknowledgment of the Holiness of God, we are fain to rush with Armes in our hands through a multitude of natural passions, and fight the way through the oppositions of our own sensitive appetite. How softly do we naturally sink down into that which sets us at a greater distance from God? There is no active, potent, efficacious sense of a God by nature. The heart of the Sons of men is fully set in them to do evil, Eccl. 8. 11. The heart in the singular number; as if there were but one Common heart beat in all mankind, and bent as with own pulse, with a joynt consent and force to wickedness, without a sense of the Authority of God in the Earth; as if one heart acted every Man in the world.

\* Rom. 3. 9,  
10. 11. 12.

The great Apostle cites the Text to verifie the charge he brought against all mankind. \* In his interpretation, the *Jews*, who owned one God, and were dignified with special privileges, as well as the *Gentiles* that maintained many Gods, are within the compass of this Character: The Apostle leaves out the first part of the Text, the fool hath said in his heart, but takes in the latter part, and the verses following: He charges all, because all, every man of them was under sin: There is none that seeks God, and ver. 19. He adds what the law saith, it speaks to those that are under the Law. That none should imagine he included only the *Gentiles* and exempted the *Jews* from this description. The Leprosie of Atheism had infected the whole Mass of human nature: No Man among Jews or *Gentiles* did naturally seek God; and therefore all were void of any spark of the practical sense of the Deity. The effects of this Atheism are not in all externally of an equal size: Yet in the fundamentals and radicals of it, there is not a hairs difference between the best and the worst men that ever traversed the world. The distinction is laid either in common Grace, bounding and suppressing it; or in special Grace killing and crucifying it. 'Tis in every one either triumphant or militant, reigning or deposed. No Man is any more born with sensible acknowledgments of God, than he is born with a clear knowledge of the nature of all the Stars in the Heavens, or Plants upon the Earth. None seeks after God. \* None seek God as his rule, as his end, as his happiness, which is a debt the Creature naturally owes to God; he desires no communion with God: He places his happiness in any thing inferior to God: He prefers every thing before him, glorifies every thing above him; he hath no delight to know him; he regards not those paths which lead to him; he loves his own filth better than Gods Holiness; his actions are tinctured, and dyed with self, and are void of that respect which is due from him to God.

\* Coccei.

The



The noblest Faculty of Man, his Understanding, wherein the remaining Linaments of the Image of God are visible; the highest Operation of that Faculty, which is Wisdom, is in the Judgment of the Spirit of God *Devilish*, while it is *earthly* and *sensual* \* : and the Wisdom of the best man is no better by Nature; a legion of impure Spirits possess it. Devilish, as the *Devil*, who though he believe there is a God, yet acts as if there were none, and wishes he had no Superior to prescribe him a Law, and inflict that punishment upon him which his Crimes have merited. Hence the Poyson of Man by Nature is said to be like the *Poyson of a Serpent*, alluding to that serpentine temptation which first infected Mankind, and changed the nature of Man into the likeness of that of the Devil. \* So that notwithstanding the Harmony of the World that presents men not only with the Notice of the Being of a God, but darts into their minds some remarks of his Power and Eternity; yet the thoughts and reasonings of Man are so corrupt, as may well be called Diabolical, and as contrary to the Perfection of God and the original Law of their Nature, as the actions of the Devil are: For since every natural Man is a Child of the Devil, and is acted by the Diabolical Spirit, he must needs have that Nature which his Father hath, and the Infusion of that Venom which the Spirit that acts him, is possessed with; though the full Discovery of it may be restrained by various Circumstances, *Eph. 2. 2.* To conclude, though no man, or at least very few arrive to a round and positive Conclusion in their hearts that there is no God, yet there is no man that naturally hath in his heart any reverence of God. \* *Jam. 3. 15.* \* *Psal. 58. 4.*

In general, before I come to a particular Proof, take some Propositions.

Proposition 1. *Actions are a greater discovery of a Principle than Words.* The Testimony of Works is louder and clearer than that of Words, and the Frame of mens hearts must be measured, rather by what they do, than by what they say. There may be a mighty distance between the Tongue and the Heart, but a Course of Actions is as little guilty of lying as Interest is, according to our common saying: All outward Impieties are the branches of an Atheism at the root of our Nature, as all pestilential sores are expressions of the Contagion in the Blood. Sin is therefore frequently called Ungodliness in our English Dialect. Mens Practices are the best Indexes of their Principles: The Current of a Mans Life, is the counter-part of the Frame of his Heart: Who can deny an Error in the Spring or Wheels, when he perceives an Error in the hand of the Dial? Who can deny an Atheism in the Heart, when so much is visible in the Life? The Taste of the water discovers what Mineral 'tis strained through. A practical Denial of God is worse than a verbal, because deeds have usually more of deliberation than words; words may be the fruit of a Passion, but a set of evil actions are the fruit and evidence of a predominant evil Principle in the Heart: All slighting words of a Prince do not argue an habitual Treason, but a succession of overt treasonable Attempts signify a settled treasonable disposition in the Mind: Those therefore are more deservedly termed Atheists, who acknowledge a God and walk as if there were none, than those (if there can be any such) that deny a God and walk as if there were one.

A Sense of God in the Heart, would burst out in the Life: Where there is no reverence of God in the Life, 'tis easily concluded there is less in the Heart.

What doth not influence a Man when it hath the addition of the Eyes, and censures of outward Spectators, and the care of a Reputation (so much the God of the world) to strengthen it and restrain the action, must certainly have less power over the Heart when it is single without any other concurrence. The Flames breaking out of a house discover the Fire to be much stronger and fiercer within. The Apostle judgeth those of the Circumcision, who gave heed to Jewish Fables, to be Denyers of God, though he doth not tax them with any notorious Prophaness. *Tit. 1. 16.* *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him;* he gives them Epithites contrary to what they arrogated to themselves: \* They boasted themselves to be holy, the Apostle calls them abominable; They bragged that they fulfilled the Law and observed the Traditions of their Fathers, the Apostle calls them disobedient, or unperswadable; They boasted that they only had the Rule of Righteousness, and a sound Judgment concerning it, the Apostle said they had a Reprobate Sense and unfit for any good work; and judges against all their vain glorious braggs, that they had not a Reverence of God in their Hearts; there was more of the Denial of



God in their Works than there was Acknowledgement of God in their Words: Those that have neither God in their Thoughts, nor in their Tongues, nor in their Works, cannot properly be said to acknowledge him: Where the Honour of God is not practically owned in the lives of men, the Being of God is not sensibly acknowledged in the hearts of men: The Principle must be of the same kind with the Actions; if the Actions be Atheistical, the Principle of them can be no better.

\* Tit. 3. 3. Prop. 2. *All Sin is founded in a secret Atheism.* Atheism is the Spirit of every Sin; all the Floods of Impieties in the World break in at the Gate of a secret Atheism: And though several sins may disagree with one another, yet like *Herod* and *Pilate* against Christ, they joyn hand in hand against the interest of God. Though lusts and pleasures be *divers*, yet they are all united in *Disobedience* to him. \* All the wicked inclinations in the heart, and struggling motions, secret repinings, self applauding confidences in our own wisdom, strength, &c. envy, ambition, revenge, are sparks from this latent fire; the language of every one of these is, I would be a Lord to my self, and would not have a God Superior to me.

\* Gen. 22. 11. The variety of sins against the *first* and *second Table*, the neglects of God and violences against Man are derived from this in the Text, *first the Fool hath said in his heart*, and then follows a legion of Devils: As all vertuous actions spring from an acknowledgment of God; so all vitious actions rise from a lurking Denial of him. All licentiousness goes glib down where there is no sense of God. *Abraham* judged himself not secure from Murder, nor his Wife from Defilement in *Gerar*, if there were no Fear of God there. \* He that makes no Conscience of Sin has no regard to the Honour, and consequently none to the Being of God. *By the Fear of God men depart from Evil*, Pro. 16. 6. By the non-regarding of God men rush into Evil. *Pharaoh* oppress'd *Israel* because he *knew not the Lord*. If he did not deny the Being of a Deity, yet he had such an unworthy Notion of God as was inconsistent with the Nature of a Deity; he a poor Creature thought himself a Mate for the Creator.

In sins of Ommission we own not God, in neglecting to perform what he enjoyns: In sins of Commission we set up some lust in the place of God, and pay to that the Homage which is due to our Maker: In both we disown him; in the one by not doing what he commands, in the other by doing what he forbids.

We deny his Sovereignty when we violate his Laws; we disgrace his Holiness when we cast our filth before his Face; we disparage his Wisdom when we set up another Rule as the Guide of our Actions than that Law he hath fixed; we slight his Sufficiency when we prefer a satisfaction in sin before a happiness in Him alone, and his Goodness, when we judge it not strong enough to attract us to him. Every sin invades the Rights of God, and strips him of one or other of his Perfections: 'Tis such a vilifying of God as if he were not God; as if he were not the supream Creator and Benefactor of the World; as if we had not our Being from Him; as if the Air we breathed in, the Food we lived by, were our own by right of Supremacy not of Donation: For a Subject to slight his Sovereign, is to slight his Royalty; or a Servant his Master, is to deny his Superiority.

\* Job. 1. 5. Prop. 3. *Sin implies that God is unworthy of a Being.* Every Sin is a kind of *cur-sing God in the Heart*\*; an aim at the destruction of the Being of God; not actually, but virtually; not in the intention of every Sinner, but in the nature of every Sin. That Affection which excites a man to break his Law, would excite him to annihilate his Being if it were in his power. A Man in every sin aims to set up his own will as his rule, and his own glory as the end of his actions against the will and glory of God; and could a Sinner attain his end, God would be destroyed: God cannot out live his will and his glory: God cannot have another rule but his own will, nor another end but his own honour: Sin is called a *turning the back upon God*, \* Jer. 32. 33. Deut. 32. 15. *a kicking against him*, \* as if he were a slighter person than the meanest beggar. What greater contempt can be shew'd to the meanest, vilest person, than to turn the back, lift up the heel, and thrust away with indignation? All which actions, though they signify that such a one hath a Being; yet they testify also that he is unworthy of a Being, that he is an unuseful Being in the world, and that it were well the world were rid of him.

\* Numb. 15. 30.  
Ezek. 20. 27.

All Sin against Knowledge is called a *Reproach of God*. \* Reproach is a vilifying



a man as unworthy to be admitted into Company. We naturally Judge God unfit to be conversed with. God is the *term* turned *from* by a sinner: Sin is the *term* turned *to*; which implies a greater excellency in the nature of sin, than in the nature of God. And as we naturally Judge *it*, more worthy to have a being in our affections, so consequently more worthy to have a being in the world, than that infinite nature from whom we derive our beings, and our all; and upon whom with a kind of disdain we turn our backs. Whosoever thinks the Notion of a Deity unfit to be cherished in his mind by warm Meditation, implies that he cares not whether he hath a being in the world or no. Now tho the light of a Deity shines so clearly in Man, and the stings of Conscience are so smart, that he cannot absolutely deny the being of a God; yet most Men endeavour to smother this knowledge, and make the Notion of a God a senseless and useless thing, Rom. 1. 28. *They like not to retain God in their knowledge.*

It is said, *Cain went out from the presence of the Lord*, Gen. 4. 16. That is, from the Worship of God. Our refusing or abhorring the presence of a man implies a carelessness whether he continue in the World or no: Tis as using him, as if he had no being, or as if we were not concerned in it. Hence all men in *Adam*, under the Emblem of the prodigal, are said to go into a far Country. Not in respect of place, because of Gods Omnipresence; but in respect of acknowledgment and affection; they mind and love any thing but God. And the descriptions of the Nations of the world, lying in the Ruines of *Adams* fall, and the dregs of that revolt, is that they *know not God*: They forget God, as if there were no such being above them; and indeed he that doth the works of the *Devil*, owns the Devil to be more worthy of observance, and consequently of a being, than God, whose nature he forgets and whose presence he abhors.

*Proposition, 4. Every sin in its own nature would render God a foolish and impure being.* Many Transgressors esteem their acts, which are contrary to the Law of God, both Wise and Good: If so, the Law against which they are committed, must be both foolish and impure: What a reflection is there then upon the Law-giver? The Moral Law is not properly a meer act of Gods Will considered in itself, or a Tyrannical Edict, like those of whom it may well be said, *stat pro ratione voluntas*: But it commands those things, which are good in their own nature, and prohibits those things, which are in their own nature evil; and therefore is an act of his Wisdom and Righteousness; the result of his wise Council, and an extract of his pure nature; as all the Laws of just Law-givers, are not only the acts of their Will, but of a Will governed by Reason and Justice, and for the good of the publick, whereof they are conservators. If the Moral commands of God were only acts of his Will, and had not an intrinsic necessity, reason and goodness, God might have commanded the quite contrary, and made a contrary Law, whereby that which we now call Vice, might have been canonized for Virtue: He might then have forbid any Worship of him, Love to him, fear of his name: He might then have commanded Murders, Thefts, Adulteries. In the first he would have untied the link of duty from the Creature, and dissolved the obligations of Creatures to him, which is impossible to be conceived; for from the Relation of a Creature to God, obligations to God, and duties upon those obligations, do necessarily result. It had been against the rule of Goodness and Justice, to have commanded the Creature not to love him, and fear and obey him: This had been a command against Righteousness, Goodness, and intrinsic obligations to Gratitude: And should Murder, Adulteries, Rapines have been commanded instead of the contrary, God would have destroyed his own Creation; he would have acted against the rule of goodness and order; he had been an unjust tyrannical Governor of the world: Publick society would have been crackt in peices, and the world become a Shambles, a Brothel House, a place below the common sentiments of a meer man. All sin therefore being against the Law of God, the Wisdom and holy rectitude of Gods Nature is denied in every Act of disobedience: And what is the consequence of this, but that God is both foolish and unrighteous in commanding that, which was neither an Act of Wisdom, as a Governour, nor an Act of goodness, as a benefactor to his Creature?

As was said before, presumptuous sins are called reproaches of God, Num. 15. 30. *The Soul that doth ought presumptuously, reproacheth the Lord.* Reproaches of merit



are either for natural, moral, or intellectual defects. All reproaches of God must imply a charge, either of unrighteousness, or ignorance: If of unrighteousness, tis a denial of his Holiness: If of Ignorance, tis a blemishing his Wisdom. If Gods Laws were not wise and holy, God would not enjoyn them: And if they are so, we deny infinite Wisdom and Holiness in God by not complying with them. As when a man believes not God when he promises, *he makes him a liar, 1 John 5. 10.* So he that obeys not a wise and holy God commanding, makes him guilty either of folly, or unrighteousness.

Now suppose you knew an absolute Atheist, who denyed the being of a God, yet had a life free from any notorious spot or defilement; would you in reason count him so bad as the other that owns a God in being, yet lays, by his course of action, such a black imputation, of folly and impurity upon the God he professeth to own; an imputation which renders any man a most despicable Creature?

Proposition, 5. *Sin in its own nature endeavours to render God the most miserable being.* Tis nothing but an opposition to the will of God: The will of a Creature is so much contradicted, as the Will of God is by Devils and Men: And there is nothing under the Heavens that the affections of human nature stand more point blank against, than against God. There is a slight of him in all the faculties of Man; our Souls are as unwilling to know him, as our Wills are averse to follow him, Rom. 8. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity against God, tis not subject to the Law of God, nor can be subject.* Tis true, Gods will cannot be hindered of its effect, for then God would not be supremely blessed, but unhappy and miserable: All misery ariseth from a want of that, which a nature would have, and ought to have: Besides if any thing could frustrate Gods Will, it would be superior to him: God would not be Omnipotent, and so would lose the perfection of the Deity, and consequently the Deity it self; for that which did wholly defeat Gods Will, would be more powerful than he. But sin is a contradiction to the Will of Gods Revelation; to the Will of his precept, and therein doth naturally tend to a superiority over God, and would usurp his Omnipotence, and deprive him of his blessedness. For if God had not an infinite power to turn the designs of it to his own glory, but the will of sin could prevail, God would be totally deprived of his blessedness. Doth not sin endeavour to subject God to the extravagant and contrary wills of men, and make him more a slave than any Creature can be? For the Will of no Creature, not the meanest and most despicable Creature, is so much crost, as the Will of God is by sin, Isa. 43. 24. *Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins: Thou hast endeavoured to make a meer slave of me by sin: Sin endeavors to subject the blessed God to the humour and lust of every person in the world.*

Proposition, 6. *Men sometimes in some circumstances do wish the not being of God.* This some think to be the meaning of the Text, *the fool hath said in his heart there is no God*, that is, he wishes there were no God. Many tamper with their own hearts to bring them to a perswasion that there is no God: And when they cannot do that, they conjure up wishes that there were none. Men naturally have some Conscience of sin, and some notices of Justice; Rom. 1. 32. *They know the Judgment of God*, and they know the demerit of sin; they know the Judgment of God, and that *they which do such things are worthy of death.* What is the consequent of this but fear of punishment; and what is the issue of that fear, but a wishing the Judge either unwilling or unable to vindicate the Honour of his violated Law? When God is the object of such a wish, tis a vertual undeifying of him: Not to be able to punish, is to be impotent; not to be willing to punish, is to be unjust; Imperfections inconsistent with the Deity: God cannot be supposed without an infinite Power to act, and an infinite Righteousness as the Rule of acting. Fear of God is natural to all men; not a Fear of offending him, but a Fear of being punished by him: The wishing the Extinction of God has its degree in men, according to the degree of their Fears of his just Vengeance: And though such a Wish be not in its Meridian but in the Damned in Hell, yet it hath its starts and motions in affrighted and awakened Consciences on the Earth: Under this Rank of Wishers, that there were no God, or that God were destroyed, do fall

1. *Terrified Consciences*, that are *Magor missabib*, see nothing but matter of fear round about. As they have lived without the bounds of the Law, they are afraid



to fall under the stroke of his Justice : Fear wishes the destruction of that which it apprehends hurtful : It considers him as a God to whom *Vengeance belongs*, as the Judge of all the Earth. \* The less hopes such a one hath of his Pardon, the more joy he would have to hear that his Judge should be stript of his Life : He would entertain with delight any reasons, that might support him in the conceit that there were no God : In his present State such a Doctrine would be his Security from an Account : He would as much rejoyce, if there were no God to enflame an Hell for him, as any guilty Mal-factor would if there were no Judge to order a Gibbet for him. Shame may bridle mens words, but the Heart will be casting about for some Arguments this way, to secure it self : Such as are at any time in *Spiras Case*, would be willing to cease to be Creatures, that God might cease to be Judge. *The Fool hath said in his heart*, there is no *Elohim*, no Judge, fancying God without any exercise of his judicial Authority. And there is not any wicked man under anguish of Spirit, but, were it within the reach of his power, would take away the Life of God, and rid himself of his fears, by destroying his Avenger.

\* Psal. 94. 12.

2. *Debaucht Persons* are not without such wishes sometimes : An obstinate Servant wishes his Masters death, from whom he expects Correction for his Debaucheries. As Man stands in his corrupt Nature, 'tis impossible but one time or other most debauched persons, at least have some kind of velleities, or imperfect wishes. 'Tis as natural to men to abhor those things which are unfuteable and troublesome, as it is to please themselves in things agreeable to their minds and humours : And since Man is so deeply in love with Sin, as to count it the most estimable good, he cannot but wish the abolition of that Law which checks it, and consequently the change of the Law-Giver which Enacted it ; and in wishing a change in the holy Nature of God, he wishes a destruction of God, who could not be God, if he ceased to be immutably holy. They do as certainly wish, that God had not a holy Will to command them, as despairing Souls wish, that God had not a righteous Will to punish them ; and to wish Conscience extinct for the molestations they receive from it, is to wish the power Conscience represents out of the world also.

Since the State of Sinners is a State of distance from God, and the Language of Sinners to God is *departed from us* : \* They desire as little the continuance of his Being as they desire the knowledge of his Ways : The same reason which moves them to desire Gods distance from them, would move them to desire Gods not Being : Since the greatest distance would be most agreeable to them, the Destruction of God must be so too : Because there is no greater distance from us, than in not Being. Men would rather have God not to be, than themselves under controule, that sensuality might range at pleasure : He is like a *Heifer sliding from the Yoke*, *Hos. 4. 16.* The Cursing of God in the Heart feared by *Job* of his Chidren, intimates a wishing God despoild of his Authority, that their pleasure might not be dampt by his Law. Besides, is there any natural man that sins against actuated knowledge, but either thinks or wishes that God might not see him, that God might not know his actions ? And is not this to wish the Destruction of God, who could not be God unless he were immense and omniscient ?

\* Job. 21. 14.

3. Under this rank fall those, who perform external Duties only out of a Principle of slavish Fear. Many Men perform those Duties that the Law enjoyns with the same Sentiments that Slaves perform their Drudgery, and are constrained in their Duties by no other considerations but those of the Whip and the Cudgel. Since therefore they do it with reluctancy, and secretly murmur while they seem to obey, they would be willing that both the Command were recall'd, and the Master that commands them were in another world. The Spirit of Adoption makes men act towards God as a Father, a Spirit of Bondage only eyes him as a Judge. Those that look upon their Superiors as tyrannical, will not be much concerned in their welfare ; and would be more glad to have their Nails pared, than be under perpetual fear of them.

Many men regard not the infinite goodness in their service of him, but consider him as cruel, tyrannical, injurious to their Liberty. *Adam's* Posterity are not free from the Sentiments of their common Father, till they are regenerate. You know what Conceit was the Hammer whereby the Hellish *Jael* struck the Nail into our first Parents, which conveyed Death, together with the same Imagination to all their



their Posterity, Gen. 2. 5. *God knows that in the day you eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as Gods knowing Good and Evil:* Alas poor Souls! God knew what he did when he forbid you that Fruit: He was jealous you should be too happy: It was a cruelty in him to deprive you of a Food so pleasant and delicious. The apprehension of the severity of Gods Commands riseth up no less in desires that there were no God over us, than *Adam's* apprehension of Envy in God for the restraint of one Tree mov'd him to attempt to be equal with God: Fear is as powerful to produce the one in his Posterity, as Pride was to produce the other in the Common-Root. When we apprehend a thing hurtful to us, we desire so much evil to it, as may render it incapable of doing us the hurt we fear. As we wish the preservation of what we love or hope for; so we are naturally apt to wish the not being of that whence we fear some hurt or trouble. We must not understand this as if any man did formally wish the destruction of God, as God. God in himself is an infinite Mirror of Goodness and ravishing Loveliness: He is infinitely good, and so universally good, and nothing but good; and is therefore so agreeable to a Creature, as a Creature, that it is impossible that the Creature, while it bears itself to God as a Creature, should be guilty of this, but thirst after him and cherish every motion to him. As no man wishes the destruction of any Creature, as a Creature, but as it may conduce to something which he counts may be beneficial to himself; so no man doth, nor perhaps can wish the cessation of the Being of God, as God; for then he must wish his own Being to cease also; But as he considers him clothed with some perfections, which he apprehends as injurious to him; as his Holiness in forbidding Sin, his Justice in punishing Sin: And God being judged in those perfections contrary to what the revolted Creature thinks convenient and good for himself, he may wish God stript of those perfections, that thereby he may be free from all fear of trouble and grief from him in his fallen State. In wishing God deprived of those, he wishes God deprived of his Being; because God cannot retain his Deity without a love of Righteousness and Hatred of Iniquity; and he could not testify his love to the one, or his loathing of the other, without encouraging Goodness, and witnessing his Anger against Iniquity.

Let us now appeal to our selves, and examine our own Consciences: Did we never please our selves sometimes in the thoughts, how happy we should be, how free in our vain pleasures, if there were no God? Have we not desired to be our own Lords without controule, subject to no Law but our own, and be guided by no Will but that of the Flesh? Did we never rage against God under his afflicting Hand? Did we never wish God stript of his Holy Will to command, and his Righteous Will to punish, &c.

Thus much for the general.

For the proof of this, many considerations will bring in Evidence: Most may be reduced to these two Generals.

*Man would set himself up, First as his own Rule. Secondly as his own End and Happiness.*

1. *Man would set himself up as his own Rule instead of God:* This will be evidenced in this Method.

1. *Man naturally disowns the Rule God sets him.*
2. *He owns any other Rule rather than that of Gods prescribing.*
3. *These he doth in order to the setting himself up as his own Rule.*
4. *He makes himself not only his own Rule, but would make himself the Rule of God, and give Laws to his Creator.*

1. *Man naturally disowns the Rule God sets him.* 'Tis all one to deny his Royalty and to deny his Being: When we disown his Authority, we disown his God-head: 'Tis the Right of God to be the Sovereign of his Creatures; and it must be a very loose and trivial assent that such men have to Gods Superiority over them, (and consequently to the Excellency of his Being, upon which that Authority is founded) who are scarce at ease in themselves, but when they are invading his Rights, breaking his Bands, casting away his Cords, and contradicting his Will.

Every man naturally is a Son of *Belial*, would be without a Yoke, and leap over Gods Inclosures; and in breaking out against his Sovereignty, we disown his Being as God: For to be God and Sovereign are inseparable: He could not be God, if he were



were not Supreme; nor could he be a Creator without being a Law-giver. To be God and yet inferior to another, is a Contradiction. To make Rational Creatures without prescribing them a Law, is to make them without Holiness, Wisdom and Goodness.

1. *There is in Man naturally an unwillingness to have any acquaintance with the Rule God sets him,* Psal. 14. 2. *None that did understand and seek God.* The refusing Instruction and casting his Word behind the back is a part of Atheism. \* We are heavy in hearing the Instructions either of Law or Gospel, \* and slow in the Apprehension of what we hear. The people that God had hedged in from the Wilderness of the World for his own Garden, were *foolish* and did *not know God*; were *stupid* and had no understanding of him. \* The Law of God is accounted a *strange thing*; \* a thing of a different Clymate, and a far Country from the heart of Man; wherewith the mind of Man had no natural acquaintance, and had no desire to have any; or they regarded it as a sordid thing: What God accounts great and valuable, they account mean and despicable. Men may shew a Civility to a Stranger, but scarce contract an Intimacy: There can be no Amicable Agreement between the holy Will of God and the heart of a depraved Creature: One is holy, the other unholy; one is universally good, the other stark naught. The purity of the Divine Rule renders it nauseous to the impurity of a carnal heart. Water and Fire may as well friendly kiss each other and live together without quarrelling and hissing, as the holy Will of God and the unregenerate heart of a fallen Creature.

\* Psal. 50. 17.

\* Heb. 5. 11, 12.

\* Jer. 4. 22.

\* Hol. 8. 12.

The nauseating a *Holy Rule* is an Evidence of Atheism in the heart, as the nauseating wholesome Food is of putrified Flegm in the Stomack. 'Tis found more or less in every Christian, in the Remainders, though not in a full Empire. As there is a Law in *his Mind* whereby he delights in the Law of God, so there is a Law in *his Members* whereby he wars against the Law of God, Rom. 7. 22, 23, 25. How predominant is this loathing of the Law of God, when corrupt Nature is in its full strength, without any Principle to controul it? There is in the *Mind* of such a one a Darkness, whereby it is ignorant of it, and in the *Will* a Depravedness whereby it is repugnant to it. If Man were naturally willing and able to have an intimate acquaintance with, and delight in the Law of God, it had not been such a signal favour for God to promise to *write the Law in the heart*. A man may sooner engrave the Chronicle of a whole Nation, or all the Records of God in the Scripture upon the hardest Marble with his bare finger, than write one Syllable of the Law of God in a spiritual manner upon his heart. For,

1. *Men are negligent in using the means for the knowledge of Gods Will.* All natural men are Fools, who know not how to use the *price God puts into their hands*; \* They put not a due estimate upon opportunities and means of Grace, and account that Law-Folly which is the Birth of an infinite and holy Wisdom. The knowledge of God which they may glean from Creatures, and is more pleasant to the natural gust of men, is not improved to the Glory of God, if we will believe the Indictment the *Apostle* brings against the *Gentiles*. \* And most of those that have dived into the depths of Nature, have been more studious of the qualities of the Creatures, than of the excellency of the nature, or the discovery of the mind of God in them; who regard only the rising and motions of the Star, but follow not with the wise men, its conduct to the King of the *Jews*. How often do we see men filled with an eager thirst for all other kind of knowledge, that cannot acquiesce in a twilight discovery, but are inquisitive into the causes and reasons of effects, yet are contented with a weak and languishing knowledge of God and his Law, and are easily tired with the Proposals of them?

\* Pro. 17. 15.

\* Rom. 1. 21.

He now that nauseates the means whereby he may come to know and obey God, has no intention to make the Law of God his Rule: There is no man that intends seriously an end, but he intends means in order to that end: As when a man intends the preservation or recovery of his health, he will intend means in order to those ends, otherwise he cannot be said to intend his health: So he that is not diligent in using means to know the mind of God, has no sound intention to make the Will and Law of God his Rule. Is not the inquiry after the Will of God made a work by the by, and fain to lacquy after other concerns of an inferior nature, if it hath any place at all in the Soul? which is a despising the Being of God: The Notion of the Sovereignty of God, bears the same date with the Notion of his Godhead;

and



and by the same way that he reveals Himself, he reveals his Authority over us; whether it be by Creatures without, or Conscience within. All Authority over Rational Creatures consists in commanding and directing; the duty of Rational Creatures in compliance with that Authority consists in obeying: Where there is therefore a careless neglect of those means which convey the knowledge of Gods Will and our Duty, there is an utter disowning of God as our Sovereign and our Rule.

2. *When any part of the Mind and Will of God breaks in upon Men, they endeavour to shake it off;* As a Man would a Sergeant that comes to arrest him; *they like not to retain God in their Knowledge,* Rom. 1. 28. *A natural Man receives not the things of the Spirit of God;* that is, into his Affection; he pulseth them back as men do troublesome and importunate Beggars: They have no kindness to bestow upon it: They thrust with both shoulders against the Truth of God, when it presseth in upon them; and dash as much contempt upon it as the *Pharisees* did upon the Doctrine our Saviour directed against their Covetousness. As men naturally delight to be without God in the world, so they delight to be without any offspring of God in their thoughts. Since the Spiritual Palate of Man is depraved, Divine Truth is unfavoury and ungrateful to us, till our taste and relish is restored by Grace: Hence men damp and quench the motions of the Spirit to Obedience and Compliance with the Dictates of God; strip them of their Life and Vigor, and kill them in the Womb. How unable are our Memories to retain the substance of spiritual Truth; but like Sand in a Glass, put in at one part and runs out at the other? Have not many a secret wish, that the Scripture had never mentioned some truths, or that they were blotted out of the *Bible*, because they face their Consciences, and discourage those boiling Lusts they would with eagerness and delight pursue? Me thinks that interruption *John* gives our Saviour when he was upon the Reproof of their *Pride*, looks little better \* than a design to divert him from a discourse so much against the grain, by telling him a story of their *prohibiting one to cast out Devils*, because he followed not them. How glad are men when they can raise a Battery against a Command of God, and raise some smart Objection whereby they may shelter themselves from the strictness of it?

\* Mark 9. 33-38

3. *When men cannot shake off the Notices of the Will and Mind of God, they have no pleasure in the consideration of them.* Which could not possibly be, if there were a real and fixed design to own the Mind and Law of God as our Rule: Subjects or Servants that love to obey their Prince and Master, will delight to read and execute their Orders. The Devils understand the Law of God in their minds, but they loath the impressions of it upon their Wills: Those miserable Spirits are bound in Chains of Darkness, evil Habits in their Wills, that they have not a thought of obeying that Law they know. It was an unclean Beast under the Law, that did not chew the Cud: 'Tis a corrupt Heart, that doth not chew Truth by Meditation. A natural man is said not to know God, or the things of God; he may know them notionally, but he knows them not affectionately. A sensual Soul can have no delight in a spiritual Law. To be *sensual* and *not to have the Spirit* are inseparable. Jude 19.

Natural Men may indeed meditate upon the Law and Truth of God, but without delight in it; if they take any pleasure in it, 'tis only as 'tis knowledge, not as it is a *Rule*; for we delight in nothing that we desire, but upon the same account that we desire it. Natural Men desire to know God and some part of his Will and Law, not out of a sense of their practical excellency, but a natural thirst after knowledge: and if they have a delight, 'tis in the act of knowing, not in the Object known, not in the Duties that stream from that Knowledge; they design the furnishing their Understandings, not the quickning their Affections; like idle Boys that strike Fire, not to warm themselves by the heat, but sport themselves with the Sparks; Whereas a gracious Soul accounts not only his *Meditation*, or the Operations of his Soul about God and his Will to be *sweet*, but he hath a joy in the object of that Meditation. \* Many have the knowledge of God, who have no delight in Him or his Will. *Owls* have Eyes to perceive that there is a Sun, but by reason of the weakness of their sight have no pleasure to look upon a Beam of it: So neither can a man by Nature love, or delight in the Will of God, because of his natural corruption: That Law that riseth up in men for Conviction and Instruction, they

\* Psal. 104. 34.



they keep down under the power of Corruption; making their Souls not the Sanctuary, but Prison of Truth, *Rom. 1. 13.* They will keep it down in their hearts, if they cannot keep it out of their heads, and will not endeavour to know and taste the Spirit of it.

4. *There is farther, arising and swelling of the Heart against the Will of God. (1.) Internal.* Gods Law cast against a hard Heart, is like a Ball thrown against a stone Wall, by reason of the resistance rebounding the further from it: The meeting of a Divine Truth and the Heart of Man, is like the meeting of two Tides, the weaker swells and foams: We have a natural Antipathy against a Divine Rule; and therefore when it is clapt close to our Consciences, there is a snuffing at it, high reasonings against it, corruption breaks out more strongly: As Water poured on Lime sets it on Fire by an *Antiperistasis*, and the more Water is cast upon it, the more furiously it burns: Or as the Sun Beams shining upon a Dung-hill makes the steams the thicker and the stench the noysomer, neither being the positive cause of the smoke in the Lime, or the stench in the Dung-hill; but by accident the causes of the eruption, *Rom. 7. 8.* But Sin taking occasion by the Commandment, wrought in me all manner of Concupiscence, for without the Law Sin was dead. Sin was in a languishing posture, as if it were dead; like a lazy Garrison in a City, till upon an Alarm from the Adversary it takes Arms and revives its courage; all the sin in the heart gathers together its force, to maintain its standing; like the vapours of the Night, which unite themselves more closely to resist the Beams of the rising Sun. Deep Conviction often provokes fierce Opposition; sometimes Disputes against a Divine Rule end in Blasphemies, *Acts 13. 45.* Contradicting and Blaspheming are coupled together. Men naturally desire things that are forbidden, and reject things commanded, from the corruption of Nature, which affects an unbounded Liberty, and is impatient of returning under that Yoke it hath shaken off; and therefore rageth against the bars of the Law, as the Waves roar against the restraint of a bank: When the Understanding is dark and the Mind Ignorant, Sin lies as dead; \* [a man scarce knows he hath such Motions of Concupiscence in him, he finds not the least breath of Wind but a full calm in his Soul; but when he is awakened by the Law, then the viciousness of nature being sensible of an Invasion of its Empire, arms it self against the Divine Law, and the more the Command is urged, the more vigorously it bends its strength, and more insolently lifts up it self against it] he perceives more and more Atheistical Lusts than before; all manner of Concupiscence, more leprous and contagious than before: When there are any motions to turn to God, a reluctancy is presently perceived; Atheistical thoughts bluster in the mind like the wind, they know not whence they come, nor whether they go: So unapt is the heart to any acknowledgement of God as his Ruler, and any re-union with him. Hence men are said to resist the Holy Ghost, *Acts 7. 51.* to fall against it, as the word signifies, as a stone or any ponderous body falls against that which lies in its way: They would dash to pieces or grind to powder that very motion which is made for their instruction, and the Spirit too which makes it, and that not from a fit of passion, but an habitual repugnance. *Ye always resist, &c. (2.) External,* 'tis a fruit of Atheism in the seventh verse of this Psalm; *Who eat up my people as they eat bread.* How do the revelations of the Mind of God meet with opposition? And the Carnal World like dogs bark against the shining of the Moon? So much men hate the Light, that they spurn at the Lanthorns that bear it: And because they cannot endure the Treasure, often sling the earthen vessels against the ground wherein it is held. If the entrance of Truth render the Market worse for *Diana's* Shrines, the whole City will be in an uproar. \* When *Socrates* upon natural Principles confuted the Heathen Idolatry, and asserted the unity of God, the whole cry of *Athens*, a learned University, is against him; and because he opposed the publick received Religion, though with an undoubted Truth, he must end his Life by Violence: How hath every Corner of the World steam'd with the blood of those, that would maintain the Authority of God in the World! The Devils Children will follow the steps of their Father, and endeavour to bruise the Heel of Divine Truth, that would endeavour to break the Head of corrupt Lust.

5. Men often seem desirous to be acquainted with the Will of God, not out of any respect to his Will and to make it their Rule, but upon some other Consideration. Truth is

\* Theſ. Salmur.  
De Spiritu.  
Sancti  
Theſ. 19.

\* Act. 19. 24.  
28. 29.



scarce received as truth. There is more of Hypocrisie than Sincerity in the pale of the Church, and attendance on the Mind of God. The outward dowry of a religious Profession makes it often more desirable than the Beauty. *Judas* was a follower of Christ for the Bag, not out of any affection to the Divine Revelation: Men sometime pretend a desire to be acquainted with the Will of God, to satisfy their own passions, rather than to conform to Gods Will: The Religion of such is not the judgment of the Man, but the passion of the Brute. Many entertain a Doctrine's for the persons sake, rather than a person for the Doctrine sake; and believe a thing because it comes from a Man they esteem, as if his lips were more Canonical than Scripture.

\* 1 Thes. 2. 13. The *Apostle* implies in the Commendation he gives the *Thessalonians*, \* that some receive the Word for human interest, not as it is in truth the Word and Will of God to command and govern their Consciences by its Sovereign Authority: Or else they have the Truth of God (as St. *James* speaks of the Faith of Christ) with respect of persons: \* and receive it not for the sake of the Fountain, but of the Channel: So that many times the same Truth delivered by another, is disregarded, which when dropping from the fancy and mouth of a Mans own Idol, is cryed up as an Oracle. This is to make not God, but Man the Rule: For though we entertain that which materially is the Truth of God, yet not formally as his Truth, but as conveyed by one we affect: And that we receive a Truth and not an Error, we owe the obligation to the honesty of the Instrument, and not to the strength and clearness of our own Judgment. Wrong considerations may give admittance to an unclean as well as a clean beast into the Ark of the Soul: That which is contrary to the Mind of God, may be entertained, as well as that which is agreeable. 'Tis all one to such that have no respect to God, what they have; As it is all one to a Sponge to suck up the foulest water or the sweetest wine, when either is applied to it.

6. Many that entertain the Notions of the Will and Mind of God, admit them with unsettled and wavering Affections. There is a great Levity in the heart of Man. The *Jews* that one day applaud our Saviour with *Hosannas* as their King, vote his Crucifixion the next, and use him as a Murderer. We begin in the Spirit and end in the Flesh. Our hearts like Lute-strings are changed with every change of weather, with every appearance of a Temptation; scarce one motion of God in a thousand prevails with us for a settled abode. 'Tis a hard task to make a signature of those Truths upon our affections, which will with ease pass current with our understandings; Our affections will as soon lose them, as our understandings embrace them. The heart of Man is unstable as water. \* Some were willing to rejoyce in *Johns* Light, which reflected a lustre on their minds; but not in his heat, which would have conveyed a warmth to their hearts: and the Light was pleasing to them but for a season, \* while their corruptions lay as if they were dead, not when they were awakened. Truth may be admitted one day, and the next day rejected. As *Austin* saith of a wicked Man, he loves the Truth shining, but he hates the Truth reproving. This is not to make God, but our own humor our rule and measure.

7. Many desire an acquaintance with the Law and Truth of God, with a design to improve some lust by it. To turn the Word of God to be a Pander to the Breach of his Law. This is so far from making Gods Will our Rule, that we make our own vile affections the Rule of his Law. How many forced Interpretations of Scripture have been coined to give content to the lusts of men; and the Divine Rule forced to bend and be squared to mens loose and carnal apprehensions! 'Tis a part of the instability or falseness of the heart to wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction; \* which they could not do, if they did not first wring them to countenance some detestable Error or filthy Crime. In *Paradise* the first Interpretation made of the first Law of God, was point blank against the mind of the Law-giver, and venomous to the whole Race of Mankind. *Paul* himself feared that some might put his Doctrine of Grace to soill a use, as to be an Altar and Sanctuary to shelter their Presumption, *Rom. 6. 1. 15. shall we then continue in Sin, that Grace may abound?* Poysonous Consequences are often drawn from the sweetest Truths: As when Gods Patience is made a Topick, whence to argue against his Providence, \* or an encouragement to commit Evil more greedily; as though because he had not presently a revenging Hand, he had not an all seeing Eye: Or when the Doctrine of Justification



tion by Faith, is made use of to depress a holy life ; or Gods readiness to receive returning sinners, an encouragement to defer repentance till a death bed. A Lyar will hunt for shelter in the reward God gave the Midwives that lyed to Pharaoh for the preservation of the Males of *Israel*, and *Rahabs* saving the Spies by false intelligence. God knows how to distinguish between grace and corruption, that may lie close together ; or between something of moral goodness and moral evil, which may be mixed : We find their fidelity rewarded, which was a moral good ; but not their lye approved, which was a moral evil. Nor will Christs conversing with sinners, be a plea for any to thrust themselves into evil Company. Christ conversed with sinners, as a Physician with diseased persons, to cure them, not approve them ; others with profligate persons to receive infection from them, not to communicate holiness to them. *Satans* Children have studied their Fathers art, who wanted not perverted Scripture to second his Temptations against our Saviour. \* How often do carnal hearts turn Divine Revelation to carnal ends, as the Sea fresh water into salt ? As men subject the precepts of God to carnal interests, so they subject the truths of God to carnal fancies. When men will allegorize the Word, and make a humorous and crazy fancy the Interpreter of Divine oracles, and not the Spirit speaking in the Word ; This is to enthrone our own imaginations as the rule of Gods Law, and depose his Law from being the rule of our reason : This is to rattle truth of its true mind and intent. Tis more to rob a man of his reason, the essential constitutive part of man, than of his estate. This is to refuse an intimate acquaintance with his Will. We shall never tell what is the matter of a precept, or the matter of a promise, if we impose a sense upon it contrary to the plain meaning of it : Thereby we shall make the Law of God to have a distinct sense according to the variety of mens imaginations, and so make every mans fancy a Law to himself.

Now that this unwillingness to have a Spiritual acquaintance with Divine Truth, is a disowning God as our rule, and a setting up *self* in his stead, is evident ; because this unwillingness respects Truth,

1. *As it is most Spiritual and Holy.* A fleshly mind is most contrary to a Spiritual Law, and particularly as it is a searching and discovering Law, that would dethrone all other rules in the Soul. As men love to be without a Holy God in the world, so they love to be without a holy Law, the transcript and image of Gods Holiness in their hearts ; and without holy men, the lights kindled by the Father of lights. As the holiness of God, so the holiness of the Law most offends a carnal heart. *Isa. 30.*

11. *Cause the holy one of Israel to cease from before us, prophecy to us right things :* They could not endure God as a holy one. Herein God places their Rebellion, rejecting him as their rule, *ver. 9. Rebellious Children that will not hear the Law of the Lord.* The more pure and precious any discovery of God is, the more it is disliked by the world : As Spiritual sins are sweetest to a carnal heart, so Spiritual truths are most distastful. The more of the brightness of the Sun any beam conveys, the more offensive it is to a distempered eye.

2. *As it doth most relate to, or lead to God.* The Devil directs his fiercest batteries against those Doctrines in the Word, and those Graces in the heart, which most exalt God, debase man, and bring men to the lowest subjection to their Creator ; Such is the Doctrine and grace of justifying faith. That men hate not knowledge as knowledge, but as it directs them to choose the fear of the Lord, was the determination of the Holy Ghost long ago. *Prov. 1. 29. for that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord.* Whatsoever respects God, clears up guilt, witnesses mans revolt to him, rouseth up Conscience, and moves to a return to God, a man naturally runs from, as *Adam* did from God, and seeks a shelter in some weak bushes of error, rather than appear before it. Not that men are unwilling to inquire into and contemplate some Divine Truths, which lie furthest from the heart, and concern not themselves immediatly with the rectifying the soul : They may view them with such a pleasure as some might take in beholding the Miracles of our Saviour, who could not endure his searching Doctrine. The light of speculation may be pleasant, but the light of conviction is grievous ; that which galls their Consciences, and would affect them with a sense of their duty to God.

Is it not easy to perceive, that when a man begins to be serious in the concerns of the Honour of God and the duty of his soul, he feels a reluctancy within him, even



against the pleas of Conscience ; which evidenceth that some unworthy principle has got footing in the hearts of men which fights against the declarations of God without, and the impressions of the Law of God within, at the same time when a mans own Conscience takes part with it, which is the substance of the Apostles discourse, *Rom. 7. 15, 16, &c.*

Close discourses of the Honour of God, and our duty to him are irksome, when men are upon a merry pin : They are like a damp in a Mine that takes away their breath ; they shuffe them out as soon as they can, and are as unwilling to retain the speech of them in their mouths, as the knowledge of them in their hearts. Gracious speeches, instead of bettering many men, distemper them, as sometimes sweet perfumes affect a weak head with aches.

3. *As tis most contrary to self.* Men are unwilling to acquaint themselves with any truth that leads to God, because it leads from *self*. Every part of the Will of God, is more or less displeasing, as it sounds harsh against some carnal interest men would set above God, or as a Mate with him. Man cannot desire any intimacy with that Law which he regards as a Bird of prey, to pick out his right eye or gnaw off his right hand, his lust dearer than himself. The reason we have such hard thoughts of Gods Will, is because we have such high thoughts of our selves. Tis a hard matter to Believe or Will that, which hath no affinity with some principle in the understanding, and no interest in our Will and Passions : Our unwillingness to be acquainted with the Will of God ariseth from the disproportion between that and our corrupt hearts, *We are alienated from the life of God in our minds*, Eph. 4. 18, 19. As we live not like God, so we neither think, or Will as God : There is an antipathy in the heart of man against that Doctrine, which teaches us to deny our selves and be under the rule of another : But whatsoever favours the ambition, lusts, and profits of men, is easily entertainable. Many are fond of those Sciences, which may enrich their understandings, and grate not upon their sensual delights. Many have an admirable dexterity in finding out *Philosophical* reasons, *Mathematical* demonstrations, or raising observations upon the Records of *History*, and spend much time and many serious and affectionate thoughts in the study of them ; In those they have not immediatly to do with God, their beloved pleasures are not impaired : Tis a satisfaction to *self* without the exercise of any hostility against it. But had those Sciences been against *self*, as much as the Law and Will of God, they had long since been rooted out of the World. Why did the *Young-man* turn his back upon the Law of Christ ? because of his worldly *self* : Why did the *Pharisees* mock at the Doctrine of our Saviour and not at their own traditions ? because of Covetous *self*. Why did the *Jews* slight the person of our Saviour and put him to death, after the reading so many Credentials of his being sent from Heaven ? because of ambitious *self*, that the *Romans* might not come and take away their Kingdom. If the Law of God were fitted to the humors of *self*, it would be readily and cordially observed by all men : *Self* is the measure of a world of seeming Religious actions ; while God seems to be the object, and his Law the motive, *self* is the rule and end ; *Zach. 7. 5. Did you fast unto me, &c.*

2 As men discover their disowning the Will of God as a rule by unwillingness to be acquainted with it, so they discover it, *by the contempt of it, after they cannot avoid the Notions and some impressions of it.* The rule of God is burthensome to a sinner, he flies from it as from a frightful bug-bear, and unpleasant Yoke : Sin against the knowledge of the Law is therefore called, *a going back from the Commandment of Gods lips*, Job. 23. 12. *A casting Gods word behind them*, \* as a contemptible thing, fitter to be trodden in the dirt, than lodged in the heart : Nay it is a casting it off as an abominable thing, for so the word *נא* signifies, *Hos. 8. 3. Israel hath cast off the thing that is good* ; an utter refusal of God, *Jer. 44. 16. As for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken.* In the slight of his precepts his essential perfections are slighted. In disowning his Will as a Rule, we disown all those attributes which flow from his Will, as Goodness, Righteousness and Truth. As an Act of the Divine understanding is supposed to precede the Act of the Divine Will, so we slight the infinite reason of God. Every Law, tho it proceeds from the Will of the Law-giver, and doth formally consist in an Act of the Will, yet it doth presuppose an act of the understanding. *If the Commandment be holy, just and good,*

\* *Psalm. 50. 17.*



good, as it is Rom. 7. 12. if it be the image of Gods holiness, a transcript of his righteousness, and the efflux of his goodness; then in every breach of it dirt is cast upon those Attributes which shine in it, and a slight of all the regards he hath to his own Honour, and all the provisions he makes for his Creature. This *Atheism* or contempt of God, is more taken notice of by God than the matter of the sin itself: As a respect to God in a weak and imperfect obedience is more than the matter of the obedience itself, because it is an acknowledgment of God: So a contempt of God in an act of disobedience, is more than the matter of the disobedience. The Creature stands in such an Act not only in a posture of distance from God, but defiance of him: It was not the bare act of Murder and Adultery which *Nathan* charged upon *David*, but the Atheistical principle which Spirited those evil acts. The *despising the Commandment of the Lord*, was the venom of them. \* Tis possible to break a Law without contempt; But when men pretend to believe there is a God, and that this is the Law of God, it shews a contempt of his Majesty: Men naturally account Gods Laws too strict, his Yoke too heavy, and his limits too strait: And he that liveth in a contempt of this Law, curseth God in his life: How can they believe there is a God, who despise him as a Ruler? How can they believe him to be a guide, that disdain to follow him? To think we firmly believe a God without living conformable to his Law, is an idle and vain imagination. The true and sensible Notion of a God cannot subsist with disorder and an affected unrighteousness.

This contempt is seen,

1. *In any presumptuous breach of any part of his Law.* Such sins are frequently called in Scripture *Rebellions*, which are a denial of the Allegiance we owe to him. By a wilful refusal of his right in one part we root up the foundation of that rule he doth justly challenge over us: His Right is as extensive to command us in one thing, as in another: And if it be disowned in one thing, tis virtually disowned in all, and the whole Statute book of God is contemned. Jam. 2. 10. 11. *Whoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point is guilty of all.* A willing breaking one part, tho there be a willing observance of all the other points of it, is a breach of the whole, because the Authority of God, which gives sanction to the whole is slighted: The obedience to the rest is dissembled: For the Love, which is the root of all obedience, is wanting; For *Love is the fulfilling the whole Law*: \* The rest are obeyed because they cross not carnal desire so much as the other, and so tis an observance of himself, not of God. Besides, the Authority of God, which is not prevalent to restrain us from the breach of one point, would be of as little force with us to restrain us from the breach of all the rest, did the allurements of the flesh give us as strong a diversion from the one, as from the other: And tho the Command that is transgressed be the least in the whole Law, yet the Authority which enjoins it is the same with that which enacts the greatest. And it is not so much the matter of the command, as the Authority commanding which lays the obligation.

2. *In the natural averseness to the declarations of Gods Will and mind, which may so ever they tend.* Since man affected to be as God, he desires to be boundless; he he would not have Fetters, tho they be Golden ones, and conduce to his happiness; tho the Law of God be a strength to them, yet they will not, Isa. 30. 15. *In returning shall be your strength and you would not.* They would not have a bridle to restrain them from running into the pit, nor be hedged in by the Law, tho for their security: As if they thought it too slavish and low Spirited a thing to be guided by the Will of another: Hence man is compared to a *Wild-As*, that loves to *snuff up the wind in the Wilderness at her pleasure*, rather than come under the guidance of God; \* From whatsoever quarter of the Heavens you pursue her she will run to the other.

The Israelites *could not indure what was Commanded*, \* tho in regard of the Moral part, agreeable to what they found written in their own Nature; And to the observance whereof, they had the highest obligations of any people under Heaven, since God had by many prodigies delivered them from a cruel slavery: The memory of which prefaced the *Decalogue*; Exod. 20. 2. *I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of bondage*: They could not think of the rule of their duty, but they must reflect upon the grand incentive of it in their Redemption from *Aegyptian* thralldome: Yet this people were cross to God, which

\* 2 Sam. 12.

\* 1 Cor. 13.

\* Claud.

\* Rom. 13.

\* Jer. 2. 2.

\* Heb. 12. 1.



which way soever he moved: When they were in the Brick-kilns, they cryed for deliverance; when they had heavenly Manna, they longed for their Onions and Garlick. In *Num.* 14. 3. They repent of their deliverance from Egypt, and talk of *returning again* to seek the Remedy of their Evils in the hands of their cruellest Enemies; and would rather put themselves into the Irons, whence God had delivered them, than believe one word of the Promise of God for giving them a fruitful Land: But when Moses tells them Gods Order, that they should turn back by the way of the Red-Sea,\* and that God had confirmed it by an Oath, that they should not see the Land of Canaan\*: They then run cross to this Command of God, and instead of marching towards the Red-Sea, which they had wished for before, they will go up to Canaan, as in spite of God and his threatening. *We will go to the Place which the Lord hath promised*, v. 40. which Moses calls a *Transgressing the Commandment of the Lord*, v. 41. They would presume to go up, notwithstanding Moses his Prohibition, and are smitten by the Amalekites: When God gives them a Precept, with a Promise to go up to Canaan, they long for Egypt; when God commands them to return to the Red-Sea, which was nearer to the place they longed for; they will shift sides and go up to Canaan.\* And when they found they were to traverse the Solitudes of the Desert, they took Pett against God, and instead of thanking him for the late Victory against the Canaanites, they reproach him for his Conduct from Egypt, and the Manna wherewith he nourished them in the Wilderness: They would not go to Canaan, the way God had chosen, nor preserve themselves by the means God had ordained: They would not be at Gods disposal, but complain of the badness of the way, and the lightness of Manna, empty of any necessary juyce to sustain their Nature. They murmuringly sollicite the Will and Power of God to change all that Order which he had resolved in his Council, and take another, conformable to their vain foolish desires: And they signified thereby that they would invade his Conduct, and that he should act according to their fancy; which the Psalmist calls a *tempting of God, and limiting the Holy One of Israel*, *Psal.* 78. 41.

\* ver. 25.

\* ver. 28.

\* Num. 21. 4. 5.

\* Daille Sermon.

1 Cor. 10. Ser. 9

p. 234. 235. 40.

To what point soever the Declarations of God stand, the Will of Man turns the quite contrary way. Is not the carriage of this Nation, the best then in the world? A discovery of the depth of our natural corruption, how cross Man is to God? And that charge God brings against them, may be brought against all men by Nature, that they *despise his Judgements*, and have a rooted Abhorrency of his Statutes in their Soul, *Levit.* 26. 43. No sooner had they recovered from one Rebellion, but they revolted to another: So difficult a thing it is for mans nature to be rendred capable of conforming to the Will of God: The carriage of this People is but a Copy of the Nature of Mankind, and is *written for our admonition*, 1 Cor. 10. 11. From this temper men are said to make *void the Law of God*\*: To make it of no obligation, an antiquated and moth-eaten Record. And the Pharisees by setting up their Traditions against the Will of God, are said to make his Law of *none effect*, to strip it of all its Authority, as the word signifies, *Mat.* 15. 6. *καυώσατε*

\* *Psal.* 119. 126.

3. *We have the greatest slight of that Will of God which is most for his Honour and his greatest Pleasure.* 'Tis the Nature of Man, ever since Adam, to do so, *Hos.* 6. 6. 7. God desired Mercy and not Sacrifice, the Knowledge of Himself more than burnt Offering; but they like men, as Adam, have transgressed the Covenant, invade Gods Rights, and not let him be Lord of one Tree.

We are more curious Observers of the Fringes of the Law, than of the greater concerns of it. The Jews were diligent in Sacrifices and Offerings, which God did not urge upon them as Principals, but as Types of other things; but negligent of the Faith which was to be established by him: Holiness, Mercy, Pity which concerned the Honour of God, as Governour of the World, and were imitations of the Holiness and Goodness of God, they were Strangers to. This is Gods Complaint, *Isa.* 1. 11, 12. and 16, 17.

We shall find our hearts most averse to the observation of those Laws which are Eternal and Essential to Righteousness; such, that he could not but command, as he is a Righteous Governour; in the observation of which, we come nearest to him and express his Image more clearly: As those Laws for an inward and spiritual Worship, a supreme Affection to him. God in regard of his Righteousness and Holiness of his Nature, and the Excellency of his Being, could not command the contra-



ry to these : But this part of his Will our hearts most swell against, our corruption doth most snarl at; whereas those Laws which are only positive and have no intrinsic Righteousness in them, but depend purely upon the Will of the Law-giver, and may be changed at his pleasure, ( which the other, that have an intrinsic Righteousness in them, cannot ) we better comply with, than that part of his Will that doth express more the *Righteousness* of his Nature; \* such as the *Ceremonial* part of Worship, and the *Ceremonial Law* among the Jews : We are more willing to observe Order in some outward attendances and glavering devotions, than discard secret affections to evil, crucify inward lusts and delightful thoughts: A *hanging down the head like a bulrush* is not difficult, but the *breaking the heart* like a Potters vessel to shreds and dust, (a sacrifice God delights in, whereby the excellency of God and the vileness of the Creature is owned) goes against the grain: To cut off an outward branch is not so hard, as to hack at the root. What God most loaths, as most contrary to his Will, we most love : No sin did God so severely hate, and no sin were the Jews more enclined unto, than that of *Idolatry*. The Heathen had not *changed their God*, as the Jews had *changed their glory*, Jer. 2. 11. And all men are naturally tainted with this sin, which is so contrary to the holy and excellent nature of God : By how much the more defect there is of purity in our respects to God, by so much the more respect there is to some Idol within or without us, to humor, custom and interest, &c.

Never did any Law of God meet with so much opposition as Christianity, which was the design of God from the first promise to the exhibiting the Redeemer, and from thence to the end of the World : All people drew Swords at first against it : The *Romans* prepared Yokes for their Neighbors, but provided Temples for the Idols, those people Worshipped. But Christianity, the choicest design and most delightful part of the Will of God, never met with a kind entertainment at first in any place : *Rome*, that entertained all others, persecuted this with Fire and Sword, tho sealed by greater Testimonies from Heaven, than their own Records could report in favour of their Idols.

4. *In running the greatest hazards, and exposing our selves to more trouble to cross the Will of God, than is necessary to the observance of it.* 'Tis a vain charge men bring against the Divine precepts, that they are rigorous, severe, difficult : When, besides the contradiction to our Saviour, who tells us his *Yoke is easy*, and his *Burthen light*, they thwart their own calm reason and Judgment. Is there not more difficulty to be Vicious, Covetous, Violent, Cruel, than to be Vertuous, Charitable, Kind? Doth the Will of God enjoin that, that is not conformable to right reason, and secretly delightful in the exercise and issue? And on the contrary what doth Satan and the world engage us in, that is not full of molestation and hazard? Is it a sweet and comely thing to combat continually against our own Consciences, and resist our own light, and commence a perpetual quarrel against our selves, as we ordinarily do when we sin? They in the Prophet, Mich. 6. 6, 7, 8. would be at the expence of *thousands of Rams, and ten thousand Rivers of Oil*, if they could compass them; yea, would strip themselves of their Natural affection to their first-born to expiate the *sin of their Soul*, rather than to *do Justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God*; things more conducive to the Honour of God, the welfare of the world, the security of their Souls, and of a more *easy practice* than the offerings they wished for.

Do not men then disown God when they will walk in ways hedged with thorns, wherein they meet with the Arrows of Conscience at every turn in their sides, and slide down to an everlasting punishment, sink under an intolerable slavery to contradict the Will of God? When they will prefer a sensual satisfaction, with a combustion in their Consciences, violation of their reasons, gnawing cares and weary travels, before the Honour of God, the dignity of their Natures, the happiness of peace and health, which might be preserved at a cheaper rate, than they are at to destroy them?

5. *In the unwillingness and awkwardness of the heart, when it is to pay God a service.* Men do evil with both hands earnestly, \* but do good with one hand faintly; \* Mich. 7. 3. no life in the heart, nor any diligence in the hand. What slight and loose thoughts of God doth this unwillingness imply? 'Tis a wrong to his providence, as tho we were not under his Government, and had no need of his assistance. A wrong to his excellency



lency, as tho there were no aimableness in him to make his service desirable. An injury to his goodness and power, as if he were not able or willing to reward the Creatures obedience, or careless not to take notice of it. 'Tis a sign we receive little satisfaction in him, and that there is a great unsuitableness between him and us.

1. *There is a kind of constraint in the first engagement.* We are rather prest to it than enter our selves Volunteers. What we call service to God, is done naturally, much against our Wills; tis not a delightful food, but a bitter potion; we are rather haled, than run to it. There is a contradiction of sin within us against our service, as there was a contradiction of sinners without our Saviour against his doing the Will of God. Our hearts are unweildy to any Spiritual service of God; we are fain to use a violence with them sometimes *Hezekiah*, it is said, *walked before the Lord with a perfect heart.* 2 Kings 20. 9. he walked, he made himself to walk: Man naturally cares not for a walk with God: If he hath any Communion with him, tis with such a dulness and heaviness of Spirit, as if he wished himself out of his Company. Mans nature, being contrary to holiness, hath an aversion to any act of homage to God; because Holiness must at least be pretended: In every duty wherein we have a Communion with God, Holiness is requisite: Now as men are against the truth of Holiness, because it is unsuitable to them, so they are not friends to those duties which require it, and for some space divert them from the thoughts of their beloved lusts. The word of the Lord is a Yoke, Prayer a drudgery, Obedience a strange Element. We are like fish, that *drink up iniquity like water*, \* and come not to the bank without the force of an Angle: No more willing to do service for God, than a fish is of it self to do service for Man. 'Tis a constrained act to satisfy Conscience, and such are servile, not Son-like performances, and spring from bondage more than affection: If Conscience, like a task Master, did not scourge them to duty, they would never perform it.

\* Job. 15. 16.

Let us appeal to our selves, whether we are not more unwilling to secret, Closet, hearty duty to God, than to joyn with others in some external service; as if those inward services, were a going to the rack, and rather our pennance than privileged. How much service hath God in the world from the same principle that Vagrants perform their task in Bridewel? How glad are many of evasions to back them in the neglect of the Commands of God, of Corrupt reasonings from the flesh to way-lay an Act of obedience, and a multitude of excuses to blunt the edge of the precept? The very service of God shall be a pretence to deprive him of the obedience due to him. *Saul* will not be ruled by Gods Will in the destroying the Cattle of the *Amalekites*, but by his own; and will impose upon the Will and Wisdom of God, Judging God mistaken in his Command, and that the Cattle God thought fittest to be *meat to the fowls*, were fitter to be *sacrifices* on the Altar. \*

\* 1 Sam. 15.  
3. 9. 15. 21.

If we do perform any part of his Will, is it not for our own ends to have some deliverance from trouble? *Isa.* 26. 16. *In trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a Prayer, when thy Chastening was upon them.* In affliction he shall find them kneeling in Homage and Devotion. In prosperity, he shall feel them kicking with contempt; they can *poure out a Prayer* in distress, and scarce *drop one* when they are delivered.

2. *There is a slightness in our service of God.* We are loath to come into his presence, and when we do come, we are loth to continue with him. We pay not an Homage to him heartily, as to our Lord and Governour; we regard him not as our Master, whose work we ought to do, and whose Honour we ought to aime at.

1. *In regard of the matter of service.* When the *torn*, the *lame*, and the *sick* is offered to God; \* so thin and lean a Sacrifice, that you may have thrown it to the ground with a puff, so some understand the meaning of (*you have snufft at it.*) Men have naturally such slight thoughts of the Majesty and Law of God, that they think any service is good enough for him and conformable to his Law. The dullest and dearest times we think fittest to pay God a service in; when sleep is ready to close our eyes and we are unfit to serve our selves, we think it a fit time to open our hearts to God. How few *Morning sacrifices* hath God from many persons and Families? Men leap out of their beds to their carnal pleasures or worldly employments, without any thought of their Creator and Preserver, or any reflection upon his Will as the rule of our dayly obedience. And as many reserve the dregs of their

\* Mal. 1. 13. 14.



their Lives, their Old-age, to offer up their Souls to God : So they reserve the Dreggs of the Day, their sleeping time for the offering up their service to Him : How many grudge to spend their best time in the serving the Will of God, and reserve for him the sickly and rheumatick part of their Lives ; the remainder of that which the Devil and their own Lusts have fed upon ?

Would not any Prince or Governour judge a Present half eaten up by Wild-beasts, or that which died in a Ditch, a contempt of his Royalty ? A corrupt thing is too base and vile for so great a King as God is, whose Name is *dreadful*. \* When by Age Men are weary of their own Bodies, they would present them to God ; yet grudgingly, as if a tired body were too good for him, snuffing at the Command for Service. God calls for our best, and we give him the worst. \* Mal. 1. 14.

2. *In respect of Frame.* We think any frame will serve Gods turn, which speaks our flight of God as a Ruler. Man naturally performs duty with an unholy heart, whereby it becomes an abomination to God, Pro. 28. 9. *He that turns away his Ear from hearing the Law, even his prayers shall be an abomination to God.* The Services which he commands, he hates for their evil frames or corrupt ends, Amos, 5. 21. *I hate I despise your Feast-days, I will not smell in your Solemn Assemblies :* God requires gracious services, and we give him corrupt ones : We do not rouse up our hearts, as David called upon his Lute and Harp to awake, Psal. 57. 8. Our hearts are not given to him, we put him off with bodily exercise : The heart is but Ice to what it doth not affect, [1.] *There is not that natural vigor in the observance of God, which we have in worldly business :* When we see a liveliness in men in other things change the Scene into a motion towards God, how suddenly doth their vigor shrink and their hearts freeze into sluggishness ? Many times we serve God as languidly as if we were afraid he should accept us, and pray as coldly as if we were unwilling he should hear us, and take away that lust by which we are Governed, and which Conscience forces us to pray against ; as if we were afraid God should set up his own throne and Government in our hearts. How fleeting are we in Divine Meditation, how sleepy in Spiritual exercises ? but in other exercises active : The Soul doth not awaken it self, and excite those animal and vital Spirits, which it will in bodily recreations and sports ; much less the powers of the Soul ; whereby tis evident we prefer the latter before any service to God : Since there is a fulness of Animal Spirits, why might they not be excited in holy duties as well as in other operations, but that there is a reluctancy in the Soul to exercise its Supremacy in this case, and perform any thing becoming a Creature in subjection to God as a Ruler ?

2. Tis evident also *in the distractions we have in his service :* How loth are we to serve God fixedly one hour, nay a part of an hour, notwithstanding all the thoughts of his Majesty, and the Eternity of glory set before our eye ? What man is there since the fall of Adam, that served God one hour without many wandrings and unfutable thoughts unfit for that service ? How ready are our hearts to start out and unite themselves with any worldly objects that please us ?

3. *Weariness in it* evidenceth it. To be weary of our dulness signifies a desire ; to be weary of service signifies a discontent, to be ruled by God : How tired are we in the performance of Spiritual duties, when in the vain triflings of time we have a perpetual motion ? How will many willingly revel whole nights, when their hearts will flag at the Threshold of a Religious service ? Like Dagon, \* lose, \* 1 Sam. 5. 4. both our heads to think, and hands to act, when the Ark of God is present : Some in the Prophet wished the *new Moon* and the *Sabbath over*, that they might sell their Corn, and be busied again in their worldly affairs : \* A slight and weariness of the Sabbath, was a slight of the Lord of the Sabbath, and of that freedom from the Yoke and rule of sin, which was signified by it. The design of the Sacrifices in the new Moon, was to signify a rest from the tyranny of sin, and a consecration to the Spiritual service of God. Servants that are quickly weary of their work, are weary of the Authority of their Master, that enjoins it : If our hearts had a value for God, it would be with us as with the needle to the Load-stone ; there would be upon his beck a speedy motion to him, and a fixed union with him. When the Judgments and affections of the Saints shall be fully refined in glory, they shall be willing to behold the face of God and be under his Govern-



ment to Eternity, without any weariness. As the holy Angels, have owned God as their Sovereign neer these six thousand years, without being weary of running on his Errands: But alas while the flesh clogs us, there will be some Reliques of unwillingness to hear his Injunctions, and weariness in performing them; tho men may excuse those things by extrinsecal causes, yet Gods unerring Judgment calls it a weariness of himself, Isa. 43. 22. *Then hast not called upon me O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of me O Israel.* Of this he taxeth his own people, when he tells them he would have the beasts of the Field; The Dragons and the Owls; the Gentiles, that the Jews counted no better than such, to honour him and acknowledge him their rule in a way of duty, ver. 20. 21.

6. *This contempt is seen in a deserting the rule of God, when our expectations are not answered upon our service.* When services are performed from carnal principles, they are soon cast off when carnal ends meet not with desired satisfaction. But when we own our selves Gods Servants, and God our Master, *our eyes will wait upon him till he have mercy on us.* \* Tis one part of the duty we owe to God as our Master in Heaven, to continue in Prayer, Col. 4. 1, 2. And by the same reason in all other service, and to watch in the same with thanksgiving: To watch for occasions of praise, to watch with cheerfulness for further manifestations of his Will, strength to perform it, success in the performance, that we may from all draw matter of praise: As we are in a posture of obedience to his precepts, so we should be in a posture of waiting for the blessing of it.

But naturally we reject the duty we owe to God, if he do not speed the blessing we expect from him. How many do secretly mutter the same as they in Job. 21. 15. *What is the Almighty that we should serve him, and what profit shall we have if we pray to him?* They serve not God out of Conscience to his Commands, but for some carnal profit; and if God make them to wait for it, they will not stay his leisure, but cease soliciting him any longer. Two things are exprest that God was not worthy of any Homage from them. *What is the Almighty that we should serve him?* and that the service of him would not bring them in a good Revenue or an advantage of that kind they expected. Interest drives many men on to some kind of service, and when they do not find an advance of that, they will acknowledge God no more; but like some beggars, if you give them not upon their asking, and calling you good Master, from blessing they will turn to cursing.

How often do men do that secretly, practically, if not plainly, which *Jobs* Wife advised him to, Curse God, and cast off that disguise of integrity they had assumed? Job. 2. 9. *Dost thou still retain thy integrity? Curse God.* What a stir and puling, and crying is here? Cast off all thoughts of Religious service, and be at Daggers drawing with that God, who for all thy service of him has made thee so wretched a spectacle to men, and a banquet for worms. The like temper is deciphered in the Jews Mal. 3. 14. *Tis in vain to serve God, and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinances, that we have walked mournfully before the Lord?* What profit is it that we have regarded his Statutes, and carryed our selves in a way of subjection to God, as our Sovereign, when we inherit nothing but sorrow, and the Idolatrous Neighbors swim in all kind of pleasures? as if it were the most miserable thing to acknowledge God. If men have not the benefits they expect, they think God unrighteous in himself, and injurious to them, in not conferring the favour they imagine they have merited: And if they have not that recompence, they will deny God that subjection they owe to him as Creatures. Grace moves to God upon a sense of duty; corrupt nature upon a sense of Interest: Sincerity is encouraged by gracious returns, but is not melted away by Gods delay or refusal: Corrupt nature would have God at its back, and steers a course of duty by hope of some carnal profit, not by a sense of the Sovereignty of God.

\* Reyn.

7. *This contempt is seen in breaking promises with God.* \* [One while the Conscience of a man makes vows of new obedience, and perhaps binds himself with many an Oath, but they prove like *Jonahs* Gourd, withering the next day after their birth. This was *Pharaohs* temper; under a storm he would submit to God, and let *Israel* go; but when the storm is ended, he will not be under Gods controul, and *Israels* slavery shall be increased: The fear of Divine wrath makes many a sinner turn his back upon his sin, and the love of his ruling lust makes him turn his back, upon his true Lord. This is from the prevalency of sin, that disputes with God for the Sovereignty.]

When



When God hath sent a sharp disease, as a messenger to bind men to their beds, and make an interruption of their sinful pleasures, their mouths are full of promises of a new life, in hope to escape the just vengeance of God: The sense of Hell which strikes strongly upon them, makes them full of such pretended resolutions when they howl upon their beds. But if God be pleased in his Patience, to give them a respite, to take off the Chains wherewith he seemed to be binding them for destruction, and recruit their strength, they are more earnest in their sins, than they were in their promises of a reformation; as if they had got the mastery of God, and had outwitted him. How often doth God charge them *\* of not returning to him after a succession of Judgments?* So hard it is, not only to allure, but to scourge men to an acknowledgement of God as their Ruler. \* Amos 4. 5. to ver. 11.

Consider then,

Are we not naturally inclined to disobey the known Will of God? Can we say, Lord, for thy sake we refrain the thing to which our hearts encline? Do we not allow our selves to be licentious, earthly, vain, proud, revengful, tho we know it will offend him? Have we not been peevishly cross to his declared Will? Run Counter to him and those Laws which express most of the glory of his holiness? Is not this to disown him as our Rule? Did we never wish there were no Law to bind us, no precept to check our Idols? What is this, but to wish that God would depose himself from being our Governour, and leave us to our own conduct? or else to wish that he were as unholy as our selves, as careless of his own laws as we are, that is, that he were no more a God than we, a God as sinful and unrighteous as our selves? He whose heart riseth against the Law of God to unlaw it, riseth against the Author of that Law to undecise him. He that casts contempt upon the dearest thing God hath in the world, that which is the image of his holiness, the delight of his Soul; that which he hath given a special charge to maintain, and that because it is holy, just and good; would not stick to rejoyce at the destruction of God himself. If Gods Holiness and righteousness in the beam be despised, much more will an immense goodness and holiness in the fountain be rejected: He that wisheth a beam far from his eyes, because it offends and scorcheth him, can be no friend to the Sun, from whence that beam doth issue. How unworthy a Creature is man, since he only, a rational Creature, is the sole being that withdraws it self from the rule of God in this Earth? And how miserable a Creature is he also, Since departing from the order of Gods goodness, he falls into the order of his Justice; and while he refuseth God to be the rule of his life, he cannot avoid him being the Judge of his punishment? Tis this is the original of all sin, and the fountain of all our misery.

This is the first thing man disowns, the Rule which God sets him.

Secondly, 2. *Man naturally owns any other rule rather than that of Gods prescribing.* The Law of God orders one thing, the heart of man desires another. There is not the basest thing in the world, but man would sooner submit to be guided by it, rather than by the holiness of God; and when any thing that God commands crosses our own Wills, we value it no more, than we would the advise of a poor despicable beggar

How many are *lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God?* *\* To make something* \* 2 Tim. 3. 4. which contributes to the perfection of nature, as learning, wisdom, moral virtues, our Rule, would be more tolerable: But to pay that homage to a swinish pleasure, which is the right of God, is an inexcusable contempt of him. The greatest excellency in the world is infinitely below God; much more a bestial delight, which is both disgraceful and below the nature of man. If we made the vilest Creature on Earth our Idol, tis more excusable than to be the slave of a brutish pleasure. The viler the thing is that doth possess the throne in our heart, the greater contempt it is of him who can only claim a right to it and is worthy of it. Sin is the first object of mans election, as soon as the faculty whereby he choseth comes to exercise its power: And it is so dear to man, that it is, in the estimate of our Saviour, counted as the right hand, and the right eye, dear, precious and useful members.

1. *The rule of Satan is owned before the rule of God.* The natural man would rather be under the guidance of Satan than the Yoke of his Creator. Adam chose him to be his Governour in Paradise. No sooner had Satan spoke of God in a way of derision, Gen. 3. 1, 5. *Yea, hath God said,* but man follows his Counsel and ap-



proves of the scoff; and the greatest part of his posterity, have not been wiser by his fall, but would rather ramble in the Devils Wilderness, than to stay in Gods fold. Tis by the sin of man that the Devil is become the God of the world, as if men were the Electors of him to the Government: Sin is an Election of him for a Lord, and a putting the Soul under his Government. Those that live according to the course of the world, and are loath to displease it, are under the Government of the Prince of it. The greatest part of the works done in the world is to enlarge the Kingdom of Satan. For how many ages were the laws whereby the greatest part of the world was governed in the affairs of Religion, the fruits of his usurpation and policy? When Temples were erected to him, Priests consecrated to his service; The rites used in most of the Worship of the world were either of his own Coynning, or the misapplying the Rites, God had ordained to himself, under the notion of a God: Whence the Apostle calls all Idolatrous Feasts, *the table of Devils, the cup of Devils, Sacrifice to Devils, fellowship with Devils*, \* Devils being the real object of the Pagan Worship, tho not formally intended by the Worshipper; tho in some parts of the *Indies*, the direct and peculiar worship is to the Devil, that he might not hurt them. And tho the intention of others was to offer to God, and not the Devil, yet since the action was contrary to the Will of God, he regards it as a Sacrifice to Devils. It was not the intention of Jeroboam to establish Priests to the Devil, when he Consecrated them to the service of his Calves, for Jehu afterwards calls them *the Servants of the Lord*, 2 King. 10. 23. See if there be here none of the Servants of the Lord, to distinguish them from the Servants of Baal, signifying that the true God was Worshipped under those Images, and not Baal, nor any of the Gods of the Heathens: yet the Scripture couples the Calves and Devils together, and ascribes the Worship given to one, to be given to the other. \* He ordained him Priests for the high places, and for the Devils, and for the Calves which he had made; so that they were Sacrifices to Devils, notwithstanding the intention of Jeroboam and his Subjects that had set them up and worshipped them, because they were contrary to the mind of God and agreeable to the Doctrine and mind of Satan, tho the object of their worship in their own intention were not the Devil but some deified man or some Canonized Saint: The intention makes not a good action: If so, when men kill the best Servants of God with a design to do God service, as our Saviour foretels, \* the action would not be Murder; yet who can call it otherwise, since God is wronged in the persons of his servants? Since most of the worship of the world, which mens corrupt natures incline them to, is false and different from the revealed will of God, tis a practical acknowledgment of the Devil, as the Governour, by acknowledging and practising those Doctrines, which have not the stamp of Divine Revelation upon them, but were minted by Satan to depress the Honour of God in the world: It doth concern men then to take good heed, that in their acts of worship they have a Divine rule; otherwise it is an owning the Devil as the rule; for there is no medium: Whatsoever is not from God, is from Satan.

But to bring this closer to us, and consider that which is more common among us: Men that are in a natural condition and Wedded to their lusts, are under the paternal Government of Satan, Joh. 8. 44. *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the lusts of your Father you will do.* If we divide sin into Spiritual and carnal, which division comprehends all, the Devils authority is owned in both; In spiritual, we conform to his example, because those he commits: In carnal, we obey his will, because those he directs: He acts the one; and sets us a Copy: He tempts to the other, and gives us a kind of a precept. Thus man by nature being a willing servant of sin, is more desirous to be bound in the Devils Iron Chain, than in Gods silken Cords.

What greater Atheism can there be, than to use God as if he were inferior to the Devil? to take the part of his greatest Enemy, who drew all others into the faction against him? to pleasure Satan by offending God, and gratifie our adversary with the injury of our Creator? For a Subject to take arms against his Prince with the deadliest Enemy, both himself and Prince hath in the whole world, adds a greater blackness to the Rebellion.

2. *The more visible rule preferred before God in the World, is man.* The opinion of the world is more our rule than the precept of God; and many mens abstinence from sin, is not from a sense of the Divine Will, no, nor from a principle of reason, but

\* 1 Cor. 10. 20.  
21.

\* 2 Cron. 11.  
15.

\* Joh. 15. 2.



but from an affection to some man on whom they depend, or fear of punishment from a superior : The same principle with that in a ravenous beast , who abstains from what he desires for fear only of a stick or Club : Men will walk with the Herds, go in fashion with the most, speak and act as the most do : While we conform to the world, we cannot perform a *reasonable service* to God, nor prove, nor approve practically what the good and acceptable Will of God is : The *Apostle* puts them in *opposition* to one another. \*

\* Rom. 12. 1, 2.

This appears,

1. *In complying more with the dictates of men, than the Will of God.* Men draw encouragement from Gods forbearance to sin more freely against him ; but the fear of punishment for breaking the Will of Man, lays a restraint upon them : The fear of man a is more powerful curb, to restrain men in their duty, than the fear of God : So we may please a Friend, a Master, a Governour, we are regardless whither we please God or no : Men pleasers are more than God pleasers : Man is more advanced as a rule, than God, when we submit to human orders and stagger and dispute against Divine. Would not a Prince think himself slighted in his authority, if any of his Servants should decline his commands, by the order of one of his subjects ? And will not God make the same account of us, when we deny or delay our obedience, for fear of one of his Creatures ? In the fear of man, we as little acknowledge God for our Sovereign, as we do for our comforter : Isa. 51. 12, 13. *I, even I am he, that comforteth you, who art thou, thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, &c. and forgettest the Lord thy maker, &c.* We put a slight upon God, as if he were not able to bear us out in our duty to him ; and incapable to ballance the strength of an arm of flesh.

2. *In observing that which is materially the Will of God, not because tis his Will, but the injunctions of men.* As the word of God may be received, yet not as his word, so the Will of God may be performed, yet not as his Will. Tis materially done, but not formally obeyed : An *action*, and *obedience* in that action are *two* things : as when man Commands the ceasing from all works of the ordinary calling on the Sabbath, tis the same that God enjoins ; the Cessation, or attendance of his servants on the hearing the word, are conformable in the matter of it to the Will of God ; but it is only conformable in the obediential part of the acts to the Will of man, when it is done only with respect to a human precept. As God hath a right to enact his laws without consulting his Creature in the way of his government ; So man is bound to obey those Laws, without consulting whither they be agreeable to mens laws or no : If we act the Will of God, because the Will of our superiors concurs with it, we obey not God in that, but man ; a human Will being the rule of our obedience ; and not the Divine : This is to vilifie God, and make him inferior to man in our esteem, and a valuing the rule of man above that of our Creator.

Since God is the highest perfection and infinitely good, whatsoever rule he gives the Creature must be good, else it cannot proceed from God. A base thing cannot be the product of an infinite excellency ; and an unreasonable thing cannot be the product of an infinite wisdom and goodness : Therefore as the respecting Gods Will before the Will of man is excellent and worthy of a Creature, and is an acknowledging the excellency, goodness and wisdom of God ; So the eying the Will of man before and above the Will of God, is, on the contrary, a denial of all those in a lump, and a preferring the wisdom, goodness and power of man in his Law above all those perfections of God in his. Whatsoever men do that looks like moral virtue or abstinence from vices, not out of obedience to the rule God hath set, but because of custome, necessity, example or imitation, they may in the doing of it be rather said to be Apes than Christians.

3. *In obeying the Will of man, when tis contrary to the Will of God.* As the *Israelites* willingly walked after the Commandment ; \* Not of God, but of *Jeroboam* in the case of the Calves : And made the Kings heart glad with their lies. \* They cheered him with their ready obedience to his Command for Idolatry (which was a lie in itself, and a lie in them) against the Commandment of God and the warnings of the Prophets ; rather than cheer the heart of God with their obedience to his worship instituted by him : Nay, and when God offered them, to cure them their wound,

\* Hof. 5. 11.

\* Hof. 7. 3.

their



\* Daniel 5.

their iniquity breaks out afresh; they would neither have him as a Lord to rule them, nor a Physician to cure them, Hof. 7. 1. *When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered.* The whole Persian Nation shrunk at once from a duty due by the light of nature to the Deity, upon a decree that *neither God or man should be petitioned to for thirty days, but only their King.* \* One only Daniel excepted against it, who preferred his homage to God, above obedience to his Prince. An adulterous generation is many times made the rule of mens professions, as is implied in those words of our Saviour, Mark 8. 38. *Whoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this Adulterous and sinful Generation:* Own him among his Disciples, and be ashamed of him among his enemies: Thus men are said to deny God, Tit. 1. 16. *when they attend to Jewish fables and the precepts of men rather than the word of God:* When the decrees or Canons of fallible men are valued at a higher rate, and preferred before the writings of the holy-ghost by his Apostles.

As Man naturally disowns the rule God sets him, and owns any other rule than that of Gods prescribing, so

Thirdly, 3. *He doth this in order to the setting himself up as his own rule.* As tho our own Wills, and not Gods, were the true square and measure of Goodness. We make an Idol of our own Wills: And as much as *self* is exalted, God is deposed: The more we esteem our own Wills, the more we endeavour to annihilate the Will of God: Account nothing of him, the more we account of our selves: And endeavor to render our selves his superiors by exalting our own Wills. No Prince but would look upon his Authority as invaded, his Royalty derided, if a Subject should resolve to be a Law to himself, in opposition to his known Will: True piety is to hate ourselves, deny our selves, and cleave solely to the service of God. To make our selves our *own rule*, and the object of our chiefest love is *Atheism*. If *self denial* be the greatest part of Godliness, the great Letter in the Alphabet of Religion; *Self love* is the great Letter in the Alphabet of Practical Atheism. *Self* is the great Anti-Christ and Anti-God in the World, that *sets up it self above all that is called God*: *Self love* is the Captain of that black band, 2 Tim. 3. 2. It sits in the Temple of God and would be ador'd, as God: *Self love begins*; but denying the power of Godliness, which is the same with denying the ruling power of God, *ends the list*: 'Tis so far from bending to the righteous Will of the Creator, that it would have the eternal Will of God stoop to the humor and unrighteous Will of a Creature: And this is the ground of the contention between the flesh and Spirit in the heart of a renewed man; *Flesh Wars* for the God-head of *self*, and Spirit fights for the God-head of God: The one would settle the throne of the Creator, and the other maintain a Law of Covetousness, Ambition, Envy, Lust in the stead of God.

The Evidence of this will appear in these propositions.

1. *This is natural to man as he is corrupted.* What was the venom of the sin of *Adam*, is naturally derived with his nature to all his posterity. It was not the eating a forbidden Apple, or the pleasing his Palate that *Adam* aimed at, or was the chief object of his desire; but to live independently on his Creator, and be a God to himself, Gen. 3. 5. *You shall be as Gods.* That which was the matter of the Devils Temptation, was the incentive of mans rebellion: A likeness to God he aspired to in the Judgment of God himself, an infallible interpreter of mans thoughts; *Behold, man is become as one of us, to know good and evil*, in regard of self sufficiency and being a rule to himself. The Jews understand the ambition of man to reach no further, than an equality with the Angelical nature: But *Jehovah* here understands it in another sense: God had ordered man by this prohibition not to eat of the fruit of the *Tree of knowledge of good and evil*; not to attempt the knowledge of good and evil of himself, but to wait upon the dictates of God; not to trust to his own Counsels, but to depend wholly upon him for direction and guidance. Certainly he that would not hold off his hand from so small a thing as an Apple, when he had his choice of the fruit of the Garden, would not have denyed himself any thing his Appetite had desired, when that principle had prevailed upon him: He would not have stuck at a greater matter to pleasure himself with the displeasing of God, when for so small a thing he would incur the anger of his Creator.

Thus would he despise his own understanding against the wisdom of God, and his own



own appetite against the *Will* of God: This desire of equality with God, a learned man thinks the Apostle intimates, Phil. 2. 6. *Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God*: The Sons being in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, implies that the robbery of sacrilege committed by our first Parents, for which the Son of God humbled himself to the death of the Cross, was an attempt to be equal with God, and depend no more upon Gods directions, but his own conduct, which could be no less than an invasion of the throne of God, and endeavor to put himself into a posture to be his Mate: Other sins, Adultery and Theft, &c. could not be committed by him at that time, but he immediately puts forth his hand to usurp the power of his Maker: This Treason is the old *Adam* in every man. The *first Adam* contradicted the Will of God to set up himself: The *second Adam* humbled himself, and did nothing but by the Command and Will of his Father. This principle wherein the venom of the *Old Adam* lies, must be Crucified to make way for the Throne of the humble and obedient principle of the *New Adam* or quickning Spirit. Indeed sin in its own nature is nothing else, but *a willing according to self, and contrary to the Will of God*: Lusts are therefore called the *Wills* of the flesh and of the mind. \* As the precepts of God are Gods Will: \* Eph. 2. 3. So the violations of these precepts is mans Will: And thus man usurps a God-head to himself, by giving that Honour to his own Will which belongs to God; appropriating the right of rule to himself and denying it to his Creator. That Servant that acts according to his own Will, with a neglect of his Masters, refuseth the duty of a Servant, and invades the right of his Master: This Self-love and desire of Independency on God has been the root of all sin in the World: The great controversy between God and man hath been, whether he or they shall be God; whether his Reason or theirs, his Will or theirs shall be the guiding principle: As Grace is the union of the Will of God and the Will of the Creature; so sin is the opposition of the Will of *self* to the Will of God. *Leaning to our own understanding*, is opposed as a natural, evil to *trusting in the Lord*, \* a supernatural grace. Men commonly love what is their own, their own inventions, their own fancies; therefore the ways of a wicked man are called the *ways of his own heart*; \* and the ways of a superstitious man his own devices, Jer. 18. 11. *We will walk after our own devices*: We will be a law to our selves: And what the *Psalmist* saith of the tongue, our tongues are *our own*, who shall controul us? is as truly the language of mens hearts, our Wills are our own, who shall check us?

2. *This is evident in the dissatisfaction of men with their own Consciences when they contradict the desires of self*. Conscience is nothing but an actuated or reflex knowledge of a superior power and an equitable law; a law imprest, and a power above it impressing it. Conscience is not the law-giver, but the remembrancer to mind us of that law of nature imprinted upon our Souls, and actuate the considerations of the duty and penalty, to apply the rule to our acts, and pass Judgment upon matter of fact: Tis to give the charge, urge the rule, enjoin the practice of those notions of Right, as part of our duty and obedience.

But man is much displeased with the directions of Conscience, as he is out of love with the accusations and condemning sentence of this officer of God: We cannot naturally endure any quick and lively practical thoughts of God and his Will, and distast our own Consciences for putting us in mind of it: They therefore *like not to retain God in their knowledge*, \* that is, God in their own Consciences; they would blow it out as it is the Candle of the Lord in them to direct them, and their acknowledgments of God, to secure themselves against the practice of its principles: They would stop all the avenues to any beam of light, and would not suffer a sparkle of Divine knowledge to flutter in their minds, in order to set up another directing rule suited to the fleshly appetite: And when they cannot stop the light of it from glaring in their faces, they rebel against it, and cannot endure to abide in its paths: \* He speaks not of those which had the written word, or special Revelations; but only a natural light or traditional, handed from *Adam*: Hence are all the endeavors to still it when it begins to speak, by some carnal pleasures; as *Sauls* evil Spirit with a fit of Musick; or bribe it with some fits of a glavering devotion, when it holds the Law of God in its commanding Authority before the mind: They would wipe out all the impressions of it when it presses the advancement of God above *self*, and entertain

Dr. Johnson.

\* Eph. 2. 3.

\* Pro. 3. 5.

\* Eccl. 11. 9.

\* Rom. 1. 28.

\* Job. 24. 13.



tain it with no better Complement, than *Ahab* did *Elijah*, *hast thou found me O my Enemy?*

If we are like to God in any thing of our natural fabrick, tis in the superior and more Spiritual part of our Souls: The resistance of that which is most like to God, and instead of God in us, is a disowning of the Sovereign represented by that Officer: He that would be without *Conscience*, would be without God, whole *Vice-gerent* it is, and make the *sensitive part*, which *Conscience* opposes, his *Law-giver*. Thus a man out of respect to sinful *self*, quarrels with his natural self; and cannot comport himself in a friendly behaviour to his internal implanted principles: He hates to come under the rebukes of them, as much as *Adam* hated to come into the presence of God, after he turned Traytor against him: The bad entertainment Gods deputy hath in us, reflects upon that God whose cause it pleads: Tis upon no other account that men loath the upright Language of their own reasons in those matters, and with the eternal silence of their own Consciences, but as they maintain the rights of God, and would hinder the *Idol* of *self* from usurping his God-head, and prerogative. Tho this power be part of a mans self, rooted in his nature, as essential to him and inseparable from him, as the best part of his being; yet he quarrels with it as it is Gods Deputy, and stickling for the honour of God in his Soul, and quarrelling with that sinful self he would cherish above God: We are not displeased with this faculty barely as it exerciseth a self-reflection; but as it is Gods Vice-gerent and bears the mark of his Authority in it. In some cases this *self*-reflecting act meets with good Entertainment, when it acts not in contradiction to *self*, but sutable to natural affections: As suppose a man hath in his passion struck his Child, and caused thereby some great mischeif to him, the reflection of *Conscience* will not be unwelcome to him; will work some tenderness in him, because it takes the part of *self* and of natural affection: But in the more Spiritual concerns of God, it will be rated as a busy body.

3. *Many, if not most actions, materially good in the world, are done more because they are agreeable to self, than as they are honourable to God.* As the word of God may be heard not as his word, \* but as there may be pleasing Notions in it, or discourses against an opinion or party we disaffect: So the Will of God may be performed, not as his Will, but as it may gratifie some selfish consideration, when we will please God so far as it may not displease our selves, and serve him as our Master, so far as his Command may be a Servant to our humor; When we consider not who it is that Commands, but how short it comes of displeasing that sin which Rules in our heart, pick and chuse what is least burdensom to the flesh and distastful to our lusts.

He that doth the Will of God, not out of *Conscience* of that Will, but because it is agreeable to himself, casts down the Will of God, and sets his own Will in the place of it; takes the Crown from the head of God, and places it upon the head of *self*: If things are done, not because they are Commanded by God, but desirable to us; tis a disobedient obedience; a conformity to Gods Will in regard of the *matter*, a conformity to our own Will in regard of the *motive*; either as the things done are agreeable to natural and moral self, or sinful self.

1. *As they are agreeable to natural or moral self.* When men will practise some points of Religion, and walk in the track of some Divine precepts; not because they are Divine, but because they are agreeable to their humor or constitution of nature; from the sway of a natural bravery, the *Byas* of a secular interest, not from an ingenuous sense of Gods Authority, or a voluntary submission to his Will: As when a man will avoid excess in drinking, not because it is dishonourable to God, but as it is a blemish to his own reputation, or an impair of the health of his body: Doth this deserve the name of an observance of the Divine injunction, or rather an obedience to our selves? Or when a man will be liberal in the distribution of his Charity, not with an eye to Gods precept, but in compliance with his own natural compassion, or to pleasure the generosity of his nature: The one is obedience to a mans own preservation, the other an obedience to the interest or impulse of a moral Vertue. Tis not respect to the rule of God, but the Authority of *self*; and at the best, is but the performance of the material part of the Divine Rule, without any concurrence of a Spiritual motive or a Spiritual manner. That only is a maintaining the



the rights of God, when we pay an observance to his rule, without examining the agreeableness of it to our secular interest, or consulting with the humour of flesh and blood; when we will not decline his service, though we find it cross, and hath no affinity with the pleasure of our own nature: Such an obedience as *Abraham* manifested in his readiness to sacrifice his Son: Such an obedience as our Saviour demands in cutting off the right hand. When we observe any thing of divine order upon the account of its suitableness to our natural Sentiments, we shall readily divide from him, when the interest of nature turns it's point against the interest of God's honour; we shall fall off from him according to the change we find in our own humours: And can that be valued as a setting up the rule of God, which must be depos'd upon the mutable interest of an inconstant mind? *Esau* had no regard to God in delaying the execution of his resolution to shorten his brothers dayes; though he was awed by the reverence of his Father to delay it; he considered perhaps, how justly he might lie under the imputation of hastening crazy *Isaacs* death, by depriving him of a beloved Son: But had the old mans head been laid, neither the contrary command of God, nor the nearness of a fraternal relation could have bound his hands from the act, no more than they did his heart from the resolution, *Gen. 27. 41.* *Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing, wherewith his father blessed him; and Esau said in his heart the days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother.*

So many Children, that expect at the death of their Parents great Inheritances or Portions, may be observant of them, not in regard of the rule fixed by God, but to their own hopes, which they would not frustrate by a disobliment: Whence is it that many men abstain from gross sins, but in love to their reputation? Wickedness may be acted privately, which a mans one credit puts a bar to the open commission of. The preserving his own esteem may divert him from entering into a brothell house, to which he hath set his mind before, against a known precept of his Creator. As *Pharaoh* parted with the *Israelites*, so do some men with their blemishing sins; not out of a sense of Gods rule, but the smart of present Judgments, or fear of a future wrath: Our security then, and reputation is set up in the place of God.

This also may be, and is in renewed men, who have the law written in their hearts, that is, an habitual disposition to an agreement with the law of God; when what is done is with a respect to this habitual inclination, without eying the divine precept, which is appointed to be their rule; This also is to set up a creature, as renewed self is, instead of the Creator, and that Law of his in his word, which ought to be the rule of our actions: Thus it is when men chuse a moral life, not so much out of respect to the law of nature, as it is the law of God, but as it is a law become one with their souls and constitutions: There is more of self in this, than consideration of God; For if it were the latter, the revealed law of God would upon the same reason be received as well as his natural law: From this principle of self, morality comes by some to be advanced above Evangelical dictates.

2. *As they are agreeable to sinful self.* Not that the commands of God are suited to bolster up the corruptions of men, no more than the law can be said to excite or revive sin. \* But it is like a scandal taken, not given; an occasion taken by the tumultuousness of our depraved nature. The *Pharisees* were devout in long Prayers, not from a sense of duty, or a care of Gods honour; but to satisfy their ambition, and rake together fuel for their covetousness; \* that they might have the greater esteem and richer offerings, to free by their prayers the souls of deceased persons from Purgatory; an opinion that some think the Jewish Synagogue had then entertain'd, \* since some of their Doctors have defended such a notion. Men may observe some Precepts of God to have a better conveniency to break others. *Jehu* was ordered to cut off the house of *Ahab*: The service he undertook was in it self acceptable, but corrupt nature misacted that which holiness and righteousness commanded: God appointed it to magnifie his Justice, and check the Idolatry that had been supported by that family: *Jehu* acted it to satisfy his revenge and ambition; he did it to fulfil his lust, not the will of God who enjoyn'd him: *Jehu* applauds it as zeal, and God abhors it as murder, and therefore would avenge the blood of *Jezreel* on the house of *Jehu*, *Hos. 1. 4.* Such kind of services are not paid to God for his own sake, but to our selves for our lusts sake.

\* Rom. 7. 2,

9.

\* Math. 23. 14.

You devour Widows Houses, and for a pretence makes long Prayers.

\* Gerrard in lxx.



4. *This is evident in neglecting to take Gods direction upon emergent occasions.* This follows the Text, [*none did seek God*]. When we consult not with him, but trust more to our own Will and Counsel, we make our selves our own Governours and Lords, independent upon him: As though we could be our own Counsellors, and manage our Concerns without his leave and assistance; as though our works were in our own hands and not in the *hands of God*, \* that we can by our own strength and sagacity direct them to a successful end without him. If we must *acquaint our selves with God* before we decree a thing; \* then to decree a thing without acquainting God with it, is to prefer our purblind wisdom before the infinite Wisdom of God; to resolve without consulting God, is to depose God, and deifie *self*, our own wit and strength. We would rather like *Lot* follow our own humor and stay in *Sodom*, than observe the Angels order to go out of it.

\* Eccles. 1.

\* Job 22.23.

5. *As we account the actions of others to be good or evil, as they suit with or spurn against our fancies and humours.* Vertue is a crime, and vice a vertue, as it is contrary or concurrent with our humours: Little Reason have many men to blame the actions of others, but because they are not agreeable, to what they affect and desire: We would have all men take directions from us, and move according to our beck: Hence that common Speech in the world; such an one is an honest friend, why? because he is of the *r* humour, and Jackies according to their wills: Thus we make *self* the measure and square of good and evil in the rest of mankind, and judge of it by our own fancies, and not by the will of God, the proper rule of Judgment.

Well then let us Consider.

Is not this very common, are we not naturally more willing to displease God than displease our selves, when it comes to a point that we must do one or other? Is not our own Counsel of more value with us than Conformity to the will of the Creator? Do not our Judgments often run Counter to the Judgment of God? Have his Laws a greater respect from us, than our own humours. Do we scruple the staining his honour when it comes in competition with our own? Are not the Lives of most men a pleasing themselves, without a repentance that ever they displeased God? Is not this to undeifie God, to deifie our selves, and disown the propriety he hath in us by the right of Creation and Beneficence? We order our own ways by our own humours, as though we were the Authors of our own being, and had given our selves life and understanding. This is to destroy the order that God hath placed between our wills and his own, and a lifting up of the foot above the head; 'tis the deformity of the Creature: The honor of every rational Creature consists in the service of the first cause of his being; as the welfare of every Creature consists in the orders and proportionable motion of its members, according to the Law of its Creation.

He that moves and acts according to a law of his own, offers a manifest wrong to God, the highest wisdom and chiefest good; disturbs the order of the world; nulls the design of the righteousness and holiness of God: The Law of God is the rule of that order he would have observed in the world: He that makes another law his rule, thrusts out the order of the Creator, and establishes the disorder of the Creature.

But this will yet be more evident in the fourth thing.

4. *Man would make himself the rule of God, and give Laws to his Creator.* VVe are willing God should be our benefactor, but not our ruler; we are content to admire his excellency and pay him a worship, provided he will walk by our rule.

\* Decay of  
Christian piety  
p. 169. some-  
what changed.

\* [This commits a riot upon his nature. To think him to be what we our selves would have him and wish him to be, Psal. 50. 21. VVe would amplify his Mercy and contract his Justice: We would have his power enlarg'd to supply our wants, and straightned when it goes about to revenge our crimes: VVe would have him wise to defeat our enemies, but not to disappoint our unworthy projects: We would have him all eye to regard our indigence, and blind, not to discern our guilt: We would have him true to his promises, regardless of his precepts, and false to his threatnings. VVe would new mint the nature of God according to our models, and shape a God according to our fancies, as he made us at first according to his own Image:] Instead of obeying him, we would have him obey us: Instead of owning and admiring



miring his perfections, we would have him strip himself of his infinite excellency, and cloth himself with a nature agreeable to our own. This is not only to set up *self* as the Law of God, but to make our own Imaginations the model of the nature of God.]

Corrupted man takes a pleasure to accuse or suspect the actions of God: We would not have him act conveniently to his nature; but act what doth gratifie us, and abstain from what distasts us. Man is never well, but when he is impeaching one or other perfection of Gods Nature, and undermining his Glory; as if all his Attributes must stand Indicted at the bar of our purblind Reason: This Weed shoots up in the exercise of Grace: *Peter* intended the refusal of our Saviours washing his feet, as an act of *humility*, but *Christ* understands it to be a prescribing a *law to himself*, a correcting his love, *John* 13. 8, 9.

This is evident.

1. *In the strivings against his Law.* How many men imply by their Lives, that they would have God depos'd from his Government, and some unrighteous being, step in to his Throne; as if God had or should change his Laws of Holiness into Laws of Licentiousness; as if he should abrogate his old eternal Precepts and enact contrary ones in their stead? What is the Language of such practices, but that they would be Gods Law-givers and not his Subjects; that he should deal with them according to their own wills, and not according to his righteousness? that they could make a more holy, wise and righteous Law than the Law of God? that their imaginations, and not Gods righteousness, should be the rule of his doing good to them? *Jer.* 9. 31. *They have forsaken my Law and walked after the imaginations of their own heart.*

When an act is known to be a sin, and the Law that forbids it acknowledged to be the Law of God, and after this a we persist in that which is contrary to it, we tax his wisdom as if he did not understand, what was convenient for us, *we would teach God knowledge*\*; 'tis an implicate with that God had laid aside the holiness of his nature, and framed a Law to pleasure our lusts. When God calls for *weeping and mourning and girding with sackcloth* upon approaching Judgments, then the corrupt heart is for joy and gladness, *eating of Flesh and drinking of Wine, because to morrow they should die*\*: As if God had mistaken himself when he ordered them so much sorrow, when their lives were so near an end; and had lost his understanding when he ordered such a precept: Disobedience is therefore called contention, *Rom.* 2. 3. *Contentions and obey not the truth*: Contention against God, whose truth it is that they disobey; a dispute with him, which hath more of wisdom in it self and convenience for them, his truth or their imaginations. The more the love, goodness and holiness of God appears in any command, the more are we naturally averse from it, and cast an imputation on him, as if he were foolish, unjust, cruel, and that we could have advised and directed him better. The goodness of God is eminent to us in appointing a day for his own worship, wherein we might converse with him and be with us, and our souls be refreshed with spiritual Communications from him; and we rather use it for the ease of our bodies, than the advancement of our souls; as if God were mistaken and injured his Creature, when he urg'd the spiritual part of duty. Every disobedience to the Law is an implicate giving Law to him, and a charge against him that he might have provided better for his Creature.

2. *In disapproving the methods of Gods government of the world.* If the Counsels of Heaven rould not about according to their schemes, instead of adoring the unsearchable depths of his judgments, they call him to the bar, and accuse him, because they are not fitted to their narrow Vessels; as if a Nut-shell could contain an Ocean. As corrupt reason esteems the highest truths, foolishness; so it counts the most righteous ways, unequal: Thus we commence a suit against God, as though he had not acted righteously and wisely, but must give an account of his proceedings at our tribunal. This is to make our selves Gods superiors, and presume to instruct him better in the government of the world; As though God hinder'd himself and the world, in not making us of his Privy Counsel, and not ordering his affairs according to the contrivances of our dim understandings.

Is not this manifest in our immoderate complaints of Gods dealings with his Church, as though there were a coldness in Gods affections to his Church, and a



glowing heat toward it only in us? Hence are those importunate desires for things which are not established by any promise, as though we would over-rule and over-perswade God to comply with our humour. We have an ambition to be Gods Tutors and direct him in his Counsels; *Who hath been his Counsellor, saith the Apostle? \** Who ought not to be his Counsellor, saith corrupt nature? Men will find fault with God in what he suffers to be done according to their own minds, when they feel the bitter fruit of it. When *Cain* had kill'd his brother, and his Conscience rackt him, how sawcily and discontentedly doth he answer God, Gen. 4. 9. *Am I my brothers keeper?* Since thou dost own thy self the Rector of the world, thou shouldst have preserved his person from my fury; since thou dost accept his Sacrifice before my Offering, preservation was due as well as acceptance. If this temper be found on earth, no wonder it is lodged in hell. That deplorable person under the sensible stroke of Gods Sovereign justice, would oppose his Nay, to Gods will, Luke 16. 30. (*And he said, nay, Father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they will repent*): He would presume to prescribe more effectual means than *Moses* and the *Prophets*, to inform men of the danger they incurr'd by their sensuality: *David* was displeas'd, it's said, 2 Sam. 6. 8. *When the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah*; not with *Uzzah*, who was the object of his pity, but with God who was the inflicter of that punishment.

When any of our friends have been struck with a Rod against our Sentiments and wishes, have not our hearts been apt to swell in complaints against God, as though he disregarded the goodness of such a person, did not see with our eyes, and measure him by our esteem of him? As if he should have ask'd our Counsel, before he had resolved, and managed himself according to our will, rather than his own. If he be patient to the wicked, we are apt to tax his holiness, and accuse him as an enemy to his own Law. If he inflict severity upon the righteous, we are ready to suspect his goodness, and charge him to be an enemy to his affectionate Creature. If he spare the *Nimrods* of the World, we are ready to ask *where is the God of Judgment? \** If he afflict the Pillars of the Earth, we are ready to question where is the God of Mercy? 'Tis impossible, since the depraved nature of man, and the various interests and passions in the world, that infinite power and wisdom can act righteously for the good of the Universe, but he will shake some corrupt interest or other upon the earth; so various are the inclinations of men, and such a Weather-cock Judgment hath every man in himself, that the divine method he applauds this day, upon a change of his interest he will cavil at the next: 'Tis impossible for the just orders of God to please the same person many weeks, scarce many minutes together: God must cease to be God or to be a holy, if he should manage the concerns of the world according to the fancies of men.

How unreasonable is it thus to impose Laws upon God? Must God revoke his own orders? Govern according to the dictates of his Creature? Must God, who hath only power and wisdom to sway the Scepter, become the obedient Subject of every mans humour, and manage every thing to serve the design of a simple Creature? This is not to be God, but to set the Creature in his Throne: Though this be not formally done, yet that it is interpretatively and practically done, is every hours experience.

3. *In impatience in our particular concerns.* 'Tis ordinary with man to charge God in his complaints in the time of affliction. Therefore 'tis the commendation the Holy Ghost gives to *Job*, Job. 1. 22. That *in all this*, that is, in those many waves that roll'd over him, he did not charge God foolishly, he never spake nor thought any thing unworthy of the Majesty and righteousness of God: Yet afterwards we find him warping; he nicknames the affliction to be Gods oppression of him, and no act of his goodness, Job. 10. 3. *Is it good for thee, that thou shouldst oppress?* He seems to charge God with injustice, for punishing him when he was not wicked, for which he appeals to God; *thou knowest that I am not wicked*, v. 7. and that God acted not like a Creator, v. 8.

If our projects are disappointed, what fretfulness against Gods management are our hearts rackt with? How do uncomely passions bubble upon us, interpretatively at least wishing that the arms of his power had been bound, and the eye of his omniscience been hoodwinkt, that we might have been left to our own liberty and designs? And this oftentimes when we have more reason to bless him, than repine at him: The

*Isra-*



*Israelites* murmured more against God in the Wilderness, with Manna in their mouths, than they did at *Pharaoh* in the Brickkilns, with their Garlike and Onions between their Teeth. Tho we repine at Instruments in our afflictions, yet God counts it a reflection upon himself: The *Israelites* speaking against *Moses*, was in Gods interpretation a *Rebellion* against himself. \* And Rebellion is alwaies a desire of imposing Laws and Conditions upon those against whom the Rebellion is raised. The forth dealing of the Vine-dressers in *Franconia* with the Statue of St. *Urban*, the Protector of the Vines upon his own day, is an Emblem of our dealing with God: If it be a clear day and portend a prosperous Vintage, they honour the Statue and drink healths to it; if it be a rainy day, and presage a scantiness, they daub it with dirt in indignation. We cast out our mire and dirt against God when he acts cross to our wishes, and flatter him when the wind of his Providence joyns it self to the tide of our interest.

\* Num. 16. 41  
compared with  
17. 10.

Men set a high price upon themselves, and are angry God values them not at the same rate; as if their Judgment concerning themselves, were more piercing than his. This is to disannul Gods Judgment, and condemn him and *count our selves righteous*, as tis *Job. 40. 8.* This is the Epidemical disease of human nature; they think they deserve Carelles instead of Rods, and upon crosses are more ready to tear out the heart of God, than reflect humbly upon their own hearts. When we accuse God, we applaud our selves, and make our selves his superiors, intimating that we have acted more righteously to him than he to us, which is the highest manner of imposing Laws upon him; as that *Emperor* accused the Justice of God for snatching him out of the World too soon. \* What an high piece of Practical Atheism is this, to desire that that infinite wisdom should be guided by our folly, and asperse the righteousness of God rather than blemish our own? Instead of silently submitting to his Will and adoring his Wisdom, we declaim against him, as an unwise and unjust Governor: We would invert his order, make him the Steward and our selves the proprietors of what we are and have: we deny our selves to be sinners and our mercies to be forfeited.

\* *Celum sufficiens vit. un. &c.*  
*Vita Titi. ca. 10.*

4. Tis evidenced, in *Envy*ing the gifts and prosperities of others. Envy hath a deep tincture of practical Atheism, and is a cause of Atheism. \* We are unwilling to leave God to be the proprietor and do what he will with his own, and as a Creator to do what he pleases with his Creatures: We assume a liberty to direct God what Portions, when and how he should bestow upon his Creatures: We would not let him chuse his own favourites, and pitch upon his own instruments for his Glory: As if God should have askt Counsel of us how he should dispose of his benefits. We are unwilling to leave to his wisdom the management of his own Judgments to the wicked, and the dispensation of his own love to our selves. This temper is natural: Tis as ancient as the first age of the world: *Adam* envied God a felicity by himself, and would not spare a Tree that he had reserved as a mark of his Sovereignty: The passion that God had given *Cain* to employ against his sin, he turns against his Creator: He was *wroth* with God \* and with *Abel*; but envy was at the root, because his *Brothers Sacrifice was accepted and his refused*. How could he envy his accepted person, without reflecting upon the acceptor of his offering? Good men have not been free from it. *Job* questions the goodness of God, that he should *shine upon the Counsel of the wicked*, *Job. 10. 3.* *Jonah* had too much of *self* in fearing to be counted a *false Prophet*, when he came with absolute denunciations of wrath. \* *Jonah 4. 2.* And when he could not bring a volley of destroying Judgments upon the *Ninevites*, he would shoot his fury against his Master, envying those poor people the benefit, and God the honour of his mercy: And this after he had been sent into the Whales belly to learn humiliation; which tho he exercised there, yet those two great branches of self-pride and envy were not lopt off from him in the belly of hell. And God was fain to take pains with him, and by a Gourd, scarce makes him ashamed of his peevishness. Envy is not like to cease, till all Atheism be Cashiered, and that is in Heaven.

\* *Because wicked men flourish in the world, Solicitor nullus esse putare Deos.*

\* *Gen. 4. 5.*

This sin is an imitation of the Devil, whose first sin upon Earth was Envy, as his first sin in Heaven was Pride. Tis a wishing that to our selves, which the Devil asserted as his right, to give the *Kingdoms of the World to whom he pleased*: \* Tis an anger with God, because he hath not given us a Patent for Government. It utters the

\* *Luke 4. 5.*



the same Language in disparagement of God, as *Abolom* did in reflection on his Father. *If I were King in Israel, Justice* should be better managed: If I were Lord of the world, there should be more Wisdom to discern the merits of men, and more righteousness in distributing to them their several portions. Thus we impose Laws upon God, and would have the righteousness of his Will submit to the corruptions of ours, and have him lower himself to gratify our minds, rather than fulfill his own: We charge the Author of those gifts with injustice, that he hath not dealt equally; or with ignorance, that he hath mistook his mark. In the same breath that we censure him by our perverseness, we would Guide him by our Wills.

This is an unreasonable part of *Atheism*. If all were in the same state and condition, the order of the world would be impaired: Is God bound to have a care of thee, and neglect all the world besides? *Shall the Earth be forsaken for thee?* \* *Joseph* had reason to be displeased with his Brothers, if they had muttered, because he gave *Benjamin* a double portion, and the rest a single. It was unfit that they, who had deserved no gift at all, should prescribe him rules how to dispense his own doles; much more unworthy it is to deal so with God; yet this is too rife.

\* Job. 18. 4.

5. It is evidenced, in corrupt matter or ends of Prayer and praise. When we are importunate for those things, that we know not whether the righteousness, holiness, and wisdom of God can grant, because he hath not discovered his Will in any promise to bestow them; we would then impose such conditions on God, which he never obliged himself to grant; when we pray for things not so much to glorify God, which ought to be the end of Prayer, as to gratify our selves. We acknowledge indeed by the act of petitioning, that there is a God; but we would have him un-God himself to be at our beck, and debase himself to serve our turns. When we desire those things, which are repugnant to those attributes, whereby he doth manage the Government of the world; When by some superficial services we think we have gained indulgence to sins: Which seems to be the thought of the Strumpet in her paying her vows, to wallow more freely in the mire of her sensual pleasures; \* *I have peace offerings with me, this day I have paid my vows, I have made my peace with God, and have entertainment for thee*: Or when men desire God to bless them in the Commission of some sin. As when *Balaak* and *Balaam* offered Sacrifices, that they might prosper in the Cursing of the *Israelites*, Numb. 25. 1. &c.

\* Pro. 7. 14.

So for a Man to pray to God to save him while he neglects the means of Salvation appointed by God: Or to renew him when he slights the Word, the only Instrument to that purpose: This is to impose Laws upon God, contrary to the declared Will and wisdom of God, and to desire him to slight his own institutions. When we come into the presence of God with lusts reeking in our hearts, and leap from sin to duty, we would impose the Law of our corruption on the holiness of God. While we pray the Will of God may be done, self-love wishes its own will may be performed, as tho God should serve our humors, when we will not obey his precepts. And when we make vows under any affliction, what is it often but a secret contrivance to bend and flatter him to our conditions? We will serve him if he will restore us; we think thereby to compound the business with him and bring him down to our terms.

6. It is evidenced; In positive and bold interpretations of the Judgments of God in the world. To interpret the Judgments of God to the disadvantage of the sufferer; unless it be an unusual Judgment, and have a remarkable hand of God in it, and the sin be rendered plainly legible in the affliction; is a presumption of this nature. When men will Judge the *Galileans*, whose blood *Pilate* mingled with the Sacrifices, greater sinners than others, and themselves righteous, because no drops of it were dashed upon them. Or when *Shimei*, being of the House of *Saul*, shall Judge according to his own interest and desires *Dauid's* flight upon *Abolom's* rebellion to be a punishment for invading the rights of *Saul's* Family, and depriving him of the succession in the Kingdom, \* as if he had been of Gods Privy Council when he decreed such acts of Justice in the world.

2 Sam. 16. 5.

Thus we would fasten our own Wills as a Law or motive upon God, and interpret his acts according to the Motions of self. Is it not too ordinary when God sends an affliction upon those that bear ill will to us, to Judge it to be a righting of our



our cause, to be a fruit of Gods concern for us in revenging our wrongs, as if we had heard the secrets of God, or as *Eliphaz* saith, had turned over the records of heaven, Job 15. 2. This is a judgment according to self-love, not a divine rule; and impose Laws upon Heaven, implying a secret wish, that God would take care only of them, make our concerns his own; not in ways of kindness and justice, but according to our fancies: And this is common in the prophane World in those curses they so readily spit out upon any affront; as if God were bound to draw his Arrows and shoot them into the heart of all their offenders at their beck and pleasure.

7. It is evidenc'd. *In mixing rules for the worship of God, with those which have been ordered by him.* Since men are most prone to live by sense; 'tis no wonder that a sensible worship, which affects their outward sense, with some kind of amazement, is dear to them, and spiritual worship, most loathsome.

*Pompous rites* have been the great Engine wherewith the Devil hath deceived the souls of men, and wrought them to a nauseating the simplicity of divine worship, as unworthy the Majesty and excellency of God. \* Thus the *Jews* would not understand the glory of the *second Temple* in the presence of the *Messiah*, because it had not the pompous grandeur of that of *Solomons* erecting. \* 2 Cor. 11. 3.

Hence in all Ages men have been forward to disfigure Gods models, and dress up a brat of their own; as though God had been defective in providing for his own honour in his institutions without the assistance of his Creature. This hath alwayes been in the world: the old World had their imaginations, and the new World hath continued them. The *Israelites* in the midst of miracles, and under the memory of a famous deliverance would erect a Calf. The *Pharisees*, that sat in *Moses Chair*, would coyn new Traditions and enjoyn them to be as currant as the Law of God. \* *Papists* will be blending the Christian appointments with *Pagan Ceremonies*, to please the carnal fancies of the common people. *Altars have been multiplied*, under the knowledge of the Law of God. \* Interest is made the ballance of the conveniency of Gods injunctions. *Jeroboam* fitted a worship to politick ends, and posted up *Calves* to prevent his subjects revolting from his Scepter, which might be occasioned by their resort to *Hierusalem*, and converse with the body of the people from whom they were separated. \* Men will be putting in their own dictates with Gods Laws, and are unwilling he should be the sole Governour of the World without their Counsel: They will not suffer him to be Lord of that which is purely and solely his concern. How often hath the practice of the *Primitive Church*, the Custom wherein we are bred, the Sentiments of our Ancestors been owned as a more authentick rule in matters of Worship, than the mind of God delivered in his word? 'Tis natural by Creation to worship God; and it is as natural by corruption for man to worship him in a humane way, and not in a divine. Is not this to impose Laws upon God? To esteem our selves wiser than he? To think him negligent of his own service, and that our feeble brains can find out ways to accommodate his honour, better than himself hath done? Thus do men for the most part equal their own imaginations to Gods oracles: As *Solomon* built a high place to *Moloch* and *Chemock*, upon the Mount of Olives, to face on the East part *Hierusalem* and the Temple: \* This is not only to impose Laws on God, but also to make self the Standard of them. \* 1 Kings 12. 27. \* 1 Kings 11. 7.

8. 'Tis evidenc'd, *in futing interpretations of Scripture to their own minds and humors.* Like the *Lacedemonians*, that dress the Images of their Gods according to the fashion of their own Countrey: We would wring Scripture to serve our own designs; and Judge the Law of God by the law of sin; and make the Serpentine seed in us to be the interpreter of Divine Oracles. This is like *Belsazar*; to drink healths out of the sacred Vessels. As God is the Author of his Law and Word, so he is the best interpreter of it; the Scripture having an impress of divine Wisdom, Holiness, and Goodness, must be regarded according to that impress, with a submission and meekness of Spirit and Reverence of God in it. But when in our enquiries into the word, we enquire not of God, but consult flesh and blood, the temper of the times wherein we live, or the satisfaction of a party we side withal, and impose glosses upon it according to our own fancies; it is to put Laws upon God and make self the rule of him. He that interprets the law, to bolster up some eager appetite against the Will of the law-giver, ascribes to himself as great an authority as he that enacted it.



9. *In falling off from God after some fair compliances, when his Will gracth upon us and crosseth ours.* They will walk with him as far as he pleaseth them, and leave him upon the first distast, as tho God must observe their humors more than they his Will. *Amos* must be suspended from Prophecying, because the *Land could not bear his words*, and his discourses condemned their unworthy practices against God. \* *Amos* 7. 12. *The Young man* came not to receive directions from our Saviour, but expected a Confirmation of his *own rules*, rather than an imposition of new. \* He rather cares for Commendations than instructions, and upon the disappointment turns his back; *He was sad*, that Christ would not suffer him to be rich and a Christian together, and leaves him because his Command was not suitable to the Law of his Covetousness. Some truths that are at a further distance from us, we can *hear gladly*. But when the Conscience begins to smart under others, if God will not observe our Wills, we will with *Herod* be a Law to our selves. \*

\* *Mark* 6. 22.  
27.

More instances might be observed.

*Ingratitude* is a setting up *self*, and an imposing Laws on God. 'Tis as much as to say God did no more than he was obliged to do; as if the Mercies we have, were an Act of Duty in God and not of bounty. Insatiable desires after wealth. Hence are those speeches, *Jam.* 4. 13. *We will go into such a City and buy and sell, &c. to get gain.* As tho they had the Command of God, and God must Lacquey after their Wills. VVhen our hearts are not contented with any supply of our wants, but are craving an overplus for our lust: When we are unsatisfied in the midst of plenty, and still like the *Grave*, cry *give, give.*

*Inirigibleness* under affliction, &c.

*Secondly*, 2. The second main thing. As Man would be a Law to himself; So he would be his own end and happiness in opposition to God.

Here four things shall be discoursed on.

1. *Man would make himself his own End and Happiness.*
2. *He would make any thing his End and Happiness rather than God.*
3. *He would make himself the End of all Creatures.*
4. *He would make himself the End of God.*

First, 1. *Man would make himself his own End and Happiness.* As God ought to be esteem'd the *first cause*, in point of our dependance on him, so he ought to be our *last end*, in point of our enjoyment of him. When we therefore trust in our selves, we refuse him as the first cause; and when we act for our selves and expect a blessedness from our selves, we refuse him as the Chiefest good, and last End, which is an undeniable piece of Atheism. For man is a Creature of a higher rank than others in the world; and was not made as Animals, Plants, and other works of the Divine power, materially to glorifie God; but a rational Creature, intentionally to Honour God by obedience to his Rule, dependance on his goodness and zeal for his glory. 'Tis therefore as much a slighting of God, for man, a Creature, to set himself up as his own End, as to regard himself as his own Law.

For the discovery of this, observe that there is a *three-fold self-love*.

1. *Natural*, which is common to us by the Law of nature with other Creatures, Inanimate, as well as Animate; and so closely twisted with the nature of every Creature, that it cannot be dissolved, but with the dissolution of nature it self. It consisted not with the wisdom and goodness of God to Create an unnatural nature, or to Command any thing unnatural: Nor doth he; for when he Commands us to Sacrifice our Selves, and dearest lives for himself, tis not without a promise of a more noble state and being, in exchange for what we lose. This self-love is not only commendable, but necessary, as a *Rule* to measure that duty we owe to our Neighbour, whom we cannot love as our selves, if we do not *first love* our selves: God having planted this self-love in our nature, makes this natural principle the measure of our affection to all Mankind of the same blood with our selves.

2. *Carnal self-love*, when a man loves himself above God, in opposition to God, with a contempt of God; when our thoughts, affections, designs, Center only in our own fleshly interest; and rifle God of his honour, to make a present of it to our selves: Thus the natural self-love, in it self good, becomes Criminal by the excess, when it would be superior and not subordinate to God.



3. *A Gracious self-love* : VWhen we love our selves for higher ends than the nature of a Creature, as a Creature dictates, *Viz.* in subserviency to the Glory of God. This is a reduction of the revolted Creature, to his true and happy order. A Christian is therefore said to be *Created in Christ to good works.* \* As all Creatures were Created, not only for themselves, but for the honour of God; so the Grace of the new Creation carries a man to answer this end, and to order all his operations to the Honour of God, and his well pleasing. \* Eph. 1, 10.

The *first* is from *nature*, the *second* from *sin*, the *third* from *Grace*. The *first* is implanted by *Creation*, the *second* the fruit of *Corruption*, and the *third* is by the powerful operation of *Grace*.

This *Carnal self-love* is set up in the stead of God as our last end; like the Sea, which all the little and great streams of our actions run to, and rest in.

And this is,

1. *Natural*. It sticks as close to us as our Souls; it is as natural as sin; the foundation of all the evil in the world: As *self-aborrancy* is the first stone that is laid in Conversion: So an inordinate self-love was the first inlet to all iniquity: As Grace is a rising from *self* to Center in God; so is sin a shrinking from God, into the mire of a Carnal selfishness: Since every Creature is nearest to it self and next to God, it cannot fall from God, but must immediatly sink into *self*. \* And therefore all sins are well said to be branches, or modifications of this fundamental passion. What is wrath, but a defence and strengthening *self*, against the attempts of some real or imaginary evil? Whence springs envy, but from a self-love, grieved at its own wants in the midst of anothers enjoyment, able to supply it? What is impatience, but a regret, that *self* is not provided for at the rate of our wish, and that it hath met with a shock against supposed merit? What is pride, but a sense of self-worth, a desire to have *self* of a higher Elevation than others? What is drunkenness, but a seeking a satisfaction for sensual *self* in the spoils of reason? No sin is committed as sin, but as it pretends a self-satisfaction. Sin indeed may well be term'd a mans self, because it is, since the loss of original righteousness, the form that overspreads every part of our Souls. the understanding assents to nothing false, but under the Notion of true, and the Will embraceth nothing evil but under the Notion of good; but the rule whereby we measure the truth and goodness of proposed objects, is not the unerring word, but the inclinations of *self*, the gratifying of which is the aim of our whole lives. *361, Did. 2. § 17. p. 274.*

Sin and *self* are all one: What is called a *living to sin* in one place, \* is called a living to *self* in another: \* *That they that live should not live unto themselves.* And upon this account it is that both the Hebrew word, *yan* and the Greek word, *εμαυτοῦ*, used in Scripture to express sin, properly signifie to miss the mark, and swerve from that *white* to which all our actions should be directed, *viz.* the glory of God. When we fell to loving our selves, we fell from loving God: And therefore when the *psalmist* saith, *Psal. 14. 2.* there were none that sought God, *viz.* as the last end; he presently adds, *they are all gone aside, viz.* from their true mark, and therefore become filthy. \* Rom. 6. \* 1 Cor. 5. 15.

2. Since tis natural, *Tis also universal.* \* The not seeking God is as universal as our ignorance of him. No Man in a state of nature, but hath it predominant; no renewed Man on this side Heaven, but hath it partially: The one hath it flourishing, the other hath it struggling. If to aim at the glory of God as the chief end, and not to live to our selves, be the greatest mark of the restauration of the Divine Image, \* and a conformity to Christ, who glorified not himself, \* but the Father: \* then every man wallowing in the mire of Corrupt nature, pays a homage to *self*, as a renewed Man is byast by the honour of God. \* 1 Cor. 5. 15. \* Heb. 1. 5. \* Joh. 17. 4.

The Holy-Ghost excepts none from this Crime, *Phil. 2. 21.* All seek their own. Tis rare for them to look above or beyond themselves: Whatsoever may be the immediate subject of their thoughts and enquiries, yet the utmost end and stage, is their profit, honour or pleasure: Whatever it be, that immediatly posselles the Mind and Vill, *self* sits like a Queen, and sways the Scepter, and orders things at that rate, that God is Excluded, and can find no room in all his thoughts, *Psa. 10.*

4. *The wicked through the pride of his Countenance will not seek after God, God is not*



*in all his thoughts.* The whole little World of Man is so overflowed with a Deluge of *self*, that the *Dove*, the Glory of the Creator, can find no Place where to sit its Foot; and if ever it gain the favour of Admittance, 'tis to disguise and be a Vassal to some carnal Project; as the Glory of God was a Mask for the murdering his Servants.

'Tis from the Power of this Principle, that the difficulty of Conversion ariseth. As there is no greater pleasure to a believing Soul, than the giving it self up to God; and no stronger desire in him, than to have a fixed and unchangeable Will to serve the designs of his Honour: So there is no greater torment to a wicked Man, than to part with his carnal Ends, and lay down the *Dagon of self* at the feet of the Ark. Self-Love, and Self-Opinion in the *Pharisees*, way-layd all the entertainment of Truth, *John 5. 44. They sought Honour one of another, and not the Honour which comes from God.* 'Tis of so large an Extent, and so insinuating Nature, that it winds it self into the exercise of moral Virtues, mixeth with our *Charity*, *Matt. 6. 2.* and finds nourishment in the Ashes of *Martyrdom*, *1 Cor. 13. 3.*

This making *our selves our End*, will appear in a few things.

1. *In frequent self Applauses, and inward overweening Reflections.* Nothing more ordinary in the Natures of Men, than a dotage on their own Perfections, Acquisitions, or Actions in the World: *Most think of themselves above what they ought to think, Rom. 12. 3, 4.* Few think of themselves so meanly as they ought to think. This sticks as close to us as our Skin. And as Humility is the Beauty of Grace, this is the filthiest Soyl of Nature: Our thoughts run more delightfully upon the track of our own Perfections, than the excellency of God. And when we find any thing of a seeming worth, that may make us glitter in the eyes of the World: how cheerfully do we grasp and embrace our selves? When the grosser Prophaneities of Men have been discarded, and the Floods of them damm'd up; the Head of Corruption, whence they sprang, will swell the higher within, in *self-applauding* speculations of their own Reformation, without acknowledgements of their own weaknesses, and desires of Divine Assistance to make a further Progress. *I thank God I am not like this Publican.* \* A self-reflection, with a contempt rather than compassion to his Neighbor, is frequent in every *Pharisee*. The vapors of self-affectations, in our clouded understandings, like those in the Air in misty mornings, alter the appearance of things, and make them look bigger than they are. This is thought by some to be the Sin of the fallen Angels, who reflecting upon their own natural Excellency superior to other Creatures, would find a Blessedness in their own Nature, as God did in his; and make themselves the last end of their Actions. 'Tis from this Principle we are naturally so ready to compare our selves, rather with those that are below us, than with those that are above us; and often think those that are above us, inferior to us, and secretly glory that we are become none of the meanest and lowest in natural or moral Excellencies.

How far were the gracious Pen-men of the *Scripture* from this, who when possessed and directed by the Spirit of God, and filled with a Sence of him; instead of applauding *themselves*, publish upon Record their *own faults* to all the Eyes of the World? And if *Peter*, as some think, dictated the Gospel which *Mark* wrote as his *Amanuensis*; 'tis observable, that his Crime in denying his Master, is aggravated in that Gospel in some Circumstances, and less spoken of his Repentance, than in the other Evangelists: *When he thought thereon, he wept.* \* But in the other, *He went out and wept bitterly.* \*

This is one part of Atheism and Self-Idolatry, to magnifie our selves with the Forgetfulness, and to the injury of our Creator.

2. *In ascribing the glory of what we do or have, to our selves, to our own Wisdom, Power, Vertue, &c.* How flaunting is *Nebuchadnezzar*, at the Prospect of *Babylon*, which he had exalted to be the Head of so great an Empire, *Dan. 4. 30? Is not this great Babilon that I have built? For, &c.* He struts upon the Battlements of his Palace, as if there were no God but himself in the World, while his eye could not but see the Heavens above him to be none of his own framing; attributing his Acquisitions to his own Arm, and referring them to his own Honour, for his own delight; not for the Honour of God, as a Creature ought; nor for the advantage of his Subjects, as the Duty of a Prince: He regards *Babylon* as his Heaven,

\* Luke 12. 11.

\* Mark 14. 72.

\* Matt. 26 75.

\* Luke 22. 62.



Heaven, and himself as his Idol, as if he were all, and God nothing. An Example of this we have in the present Age. But it is often observed, that God vindicates his own Honour, brings the most heroical men to contempt and unfortunate ends, as a punishment of their Pride, as he did here, *Dan. 4. 31. While the Word was in the Kings Mouth, there fell a Voice from Heaven, &c.* \* This was *Herods Crime*, to suffer others to do it: He had discovered his Eloquence actively, and made himself his own end passively, in approving the flatteries of the people; and offered not with one hand to God *the glory*, he received from his people with the other. \* *Samosatenus* is reported to put down the Hymnes which were sung for the glory of God and Christ, and caused Songs to be sung in the Temple for his own Honour.

\* Sanderfons Sermons.

Acts 12. 22, 23.

When any thing succeeds well, we are ready to attribute it to our own Prudence, and Industry: If we meet with a Cross, we fret against the Stars and Fortune, and second Causes, and sometimes against God; as they *curse God* as well as *their King*, *Esa. 8. 21.* not acknowledging any defect in themselves. The *Psalmist* by his Repetition of *Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy Name give Glory*, *Psal. 115. 1.* implies the naturalness of this temper, and the difficulty to cleanse our Hearts from those Self-reflections. If it be *Angelical* to refuse an undue Glory stolen from Gods Throne, *Revela. 22. 8, 9.* 'tis *Diabolical* to accept and cherish it. To seek our own Glory is not Glory, *Pro. 25. 27.* 'Tis vile, and the dishonour of a Creature, who by the Law of his Creation is referred to another end. So much as we sacrifice to our own credit, to the dexterity of our hands, or the sagacity of our wit, we detract from God.

3. *In desires to have self-pleasing Doctrines.* When we cannot endure to hear any thing that crosses the Flesh; though the wise man tells us, 'tis better to hear the *Rebuke of the Wise, than the Song of Fools*, *Eccles. 7. 5.* If *Hanani* the Seer reprove King *Asa* for not relying on the Lord; his passion shall be armed for *self* against the Prophet, and arrest him a Prisoner, *2 Cron. 16. 10.* If *Micaiah* declare to *Ahab* the Evil that shall befall him, *Amon* the Governour shall receive Orders to clasp him up in a Dungeon. Fire doth not sooner seize upon combustible matter, than Fury will be kindled, if *self* be but pincht. This interest of lustful *self* barr'd the heart of *Herodias* against the entertainment of the Truth, and caused her savagely to dip her hands in the blood of the *Baptist*, to make him a Sacrifice to that *inward Idol*.\*

Mark 5. 18, 19, 28.

4. *In being highly concerned for Injuries done to our selves, and little or not at all concerned for Injuries done to God.* How will the blood rise in us, when our Honour and Reputation is invaded, and scarce reflect upon the Dishonour God suffers in our sight and hearing. Violent Passions will transform us into *Bonarges* in the one Case, and our unconcernedness render us *Gallios* in the other. We shall extenuate that which concerns God, and aggravate that which concerns our selves. Nothing but the Death of *Jonathan*, a first born and a generous Son, will satisfy his Father *Saul*, when the Authority of his Edict was broken by his tasting of Hony; though he had recompensed his Crime committed in Ignorance, by the Purchase of a Gallant Victory. But when the Authority of God was violated in saving the *Amalekites* Cattel, against the Command of a greater Sovereign than himself; he can daub the business, and excuse it with a Design of sacrificing. He was not so earnest in hindring the people from the breach of Gods Command, as he was in vindicating the Honour of his own: \* He could hardly admit of an excuse to save his own Honour; but in the Concerns of Gods Honour, pretend Piety, to cloak his Avarice.

1 Sam. 15. 21.

And it is often seen, when the violation of Gods Authority, and the stain of our own Reputation are coupled together; we are more troubled for what disgraces us, than for what dishonours God: When *Saul* had thus transgressed, he is desirous that *Samuel* would turn again to preserve his own honour before the Elders, rather than grieved that he had broken the Command of God, *v. 30.*

5. *In trusting in our selves.* When we consult with our own Wit and Wisdom, more than inquire of God, and ask leave of him: As the *Assyrian*, *Isa. 10. 13.* *By the Strength of my hands I have done it, and by my Wisdom, for I am prudent.* When we attempt things in the strength of our own heads and parts, and trust in our own Industry, without application to God, for Direction, Blessing and Success, we affect the privilege of the Deity, and make Gods of our selves. The same language in reality with *Ajax* in *Sophocles*: Others think to overcome with the assistance of the Gods,

but



but I hope to gain Honour without them. Dependence and Trust is an act due from the Creature only to God. Hence God aggravates the crime of the Jews in trusting in Egypt, Isa. 31. 3. *the Egyptians are men and not Gods*. Confidence in our selves is a defection from God, Jer. 17. 5. And when we depart from and cast off God to depend upon our selves, which is but an arm of flesh, we chuse the arm of flesh for our God: We rob God of that confidence, we ought to place in him, and that adoration which is due to him, and build it upon another foundation: Not that we are to neglect the reason and parts God hath given us, or spend more time in prayer than in consulting about our own affairs; but to mix our own intentions in business, with Ejaculations to heaven, and take God along with us in every motion: But certainly it is an Idolizing of *self*, when we are more diligent in our attendance on our own wit, than fervent in our recourses to God.

6. The power of sinful *self*, above the efficacy of the notion of God, is evident in our workings for carnal *self* against the light of our own Consciences. When men of sublime reason, and clear natural wisdom, are voluntary slaves to their own lusts, row against the stream of their own Consciences, serve carnal *self* with a disgraceful and disturbing drudgery, making it their God, sacrificing natural *self*, all Sentiments of virtue, and the quiet of their lives, to the pleasure, honour, and satisfaction of carnal *self*: This is a prostituting God in his Deputy Conscience, to carnal affections, when their eyes are shut against the inlightnings of it, and their ears deaf to its voice, but open to the least breath and whisper of *self*: A debt that the Creature owes Supremely to God.

Much more might be said, but let us see what Atheism lurks in this, and how it intrencheth upon God.

1. *'Tis a usurping God's prerogative.* 'Tis Gods prerogative to be his own end, and act for his own glory; because there is nothing Superior to him in Excellency and Goodness to act for: He had not his Being from any thing without himself, whereby he should be obliged to act for any thing but himself. To make our selves then our *last End*, is to corral God in his being, the Supreme Good, and Blessedness to himself: As if we were our own Principle, the Author of our own Being, and were not obliged to a higher Power than our selves, for what we are and have. To direct the Lines of all our Motions to our selves, is to imply that they first issued only from our selves. When we are Rivals to God in his chief end, we own or desire to be Rivals to him in the principle of his being: This is to set our selves in the place of God: All things have something without them, and above them as their end: All inferior Creatures act for some Superior order in the rank of Creation; the lesser animals are design'd for the greater, and all for man: Man therefore for something nobler than himself. To make our selves therefore our own end, is to deny any Superior, to whom we are to direct our actions. God alone being the Supreme being, can be his own ultimate end: For if there were any thing higher and better than God, the purity and righteousness of his own Nature would cause him to act for and toward that as his chiefest mark: This is the highest Sacrilege, to alienate the proper good and rights of God, and employ them for our own use; to steal from him his own honour, and put it into our own Cabinets; like those birds that ravish the Sacrifice from the Altar and carried it to their own nests\*: When we love only our selves, and act for no other end but our selves, we invest our selves with the Dominion which is the right of God, and take the Crown from his head: For as the Crown belongs to the King; so to love his own Will, to Will by his own Will and for himself, is the property of God; because he hath no other Will, no other End above him to be the rule and scope of his actions.

\* Sabunde tit.  
140.

When therefore vve are by self-love transformed vvholly into our selves, vve make our selves our ovvn foundation, vvhithout God and against God; vvhether vve mind our ovvn glory and praise, vve would have a Royal State equal vvhith God, *who Created all things for himself*.\* What can man do more for God than he naturally doth for himself, since he doth all those things for himself vvhich he should do for God? We ovvn our selves to be our own Creators and Benefactors, and sling off all Sentiments of gratitude to him.

\* Pro. 16. 4.

2. *It is a vilifying of God.* When vve make our selves our End, 'tis plain language that God is not our happiness: We post-pone God to our selves, as if he vvere

not



not an object so excellent and fit for our love as our selves are : (for it is irrational to make that our end, which is not God, and not the chiefest good) *Tis* to deny him to be better than we, to make him not to be so good as our selves, and so fit to be our chiefest good as our selves are ; that he hath not deserved any such acknowledgment at our hands by all that he hath done for us : We assert our selves his superiors by such kind of acting, tho we are infinitely more inferior to God than any Creature can be to us. Man cannot dishonour God more than by referring that to his own glory, which God made for his own praise, upon account whereof he only hath a right to glory and praise and none else. He thus *changeth the glory of the incorruptible God into a Corruptible Image* ; \* a perishing fame and reputation, which extends but little beyond the limits of his own habitation ; or if it doth, survives but a few years, and perishes at last with the age wherein he lived.

\* Rom. i. 23.

3. *Tis as much as in us lies a destroying of God.* By this temper we destroy that God that made us, because we destroy his intention and his honour. God cannot outlive his Will and his Glory : Because he cannot have any other Rule but his own Will, or any other end but his own Honour. The setting up *self* as our end, puts a nullity upon the true Deity ; by paying to our selves that respect and honour which is due to God, we make the true God as no God. VVhosoever makes himself a King of his Princes rights and Territories, manifests an intent to throw him out of his Government : To chuse our selves as our end is to undecifie God, since to be the last end of a rational Creature is a right inseparable from the nature of the Deity ; and therefore not to set God, but *self* always before us, is to acknowledge no being but our selves to be God.

Secondly, 2. The second thing, *Man would make any thing his End and happiness rather than God.* An end is so necessary in all our actions, that he deserves not the name of a rational Creature, that proposeth not one to himself. This is the distinction between rational Creatures and others ; they act with a formal intention, whereas other Creatures are directed to their end by a natural instinct, and moved by nature to what the others should be moved by reason : When a Man therefore Acts for that end, which was not intended him by the Law of his Creation, nor is suited to the noble faculties of his Soul ; He acts contrary to God, overturns his order, and merits no better a title than that of an Atheist.

A Man may be said two ways to make a thing his last end and chief good.

1. *Formally.* When he actually Judges this or that thing to be his chiefest good, and orders all things to it. So Man doth not formally Judge sin to be good, or any object which is the incentive of sin to be his last end : This cannot be while he hath the exercise of his rational faculties.

2. *Virtually and implicitly.* When he loves any thing against the Command of God, and prefers in the stream of his actions the enjoyment of that, before the fruition of God ; and lays out more strength and expends more time in the gaining that, than answering the true end of his Creation : VVhen he acts so as if something below God could make him happy without God, or that God could not make him happy without the addition of something else. Thus the Glutton makes a God of his dainties ; the ambitious Man of his Honour ; the incontinent Man of his lust ; and the Covetous Man of his wealth ; and Consequently esteems them as his chiefest good, and the most noble end, to which he directs his thoughts : Thus he vilifies and lessens the true God, which can make him happy, in a multitude of false Gods, that can only render him miserable. He that loves pleasure more than God, says in his heart there is no God but his pleasure. He that loves his belly more than God, says in his heart there is no God but his belly : Their happiness is not accounted to lie in that God that made the World, but in the pleasure or profit they make their God.

In this, tho a Created object be the immediate and subordinate term to which we turn, yet principally and ultimately, the affection to it terminates in *self* : Nothing is naturally entertained by us, but as it affects our sense or mingles with some promise of advantage to us.

This is seen,

1. *In the fewer thoughts we have of God than of any thing else.* Did we apprehend God to be our chiefest good and highest end, should we grudge him the pains of a few days thoughts upon him ? Men in their Travells are frequently thinking



thinking upon their intended stage: But our thoughts run upon new acquisitions to increase our wealth, rear up our Families, Revenge our injuries and support our reputation: Trifles possess us; but *God is not in all our thoughts*, \* seldom the sole object of them. VVe have durable thoughts of transitory things, and fitting thoughts of a durable and Eternal good. The Covenant of grace engageth the whole heart to God, and bars any thing else from ingrossing it: But what strangers are God and the Souls of most men? Though we have the knowledge of him by Creation, yet he is for the most part an unknown God in the Relations wherein he stands to us, because a God undelighted in: Hence it is, as one observes, \* that because we observe not the ways of Gods wisdom, conceive not of him in his vast perfections, nor are stricken with an admiration of his goodness, that we have fewer good sacred Poems, than of any other kind. The wits of Men hang the wing when they come to exercise their reasons and fancies about God. Parts and strength are given us, as well as Corn and Wine to the *Israelites* for the service of God; but those are Consecrated to some Cursed *Baal*. \* Like *Venus* in the Poet, we forsake Heaven to follow some *Adonis*.

\* Phil. 1. 4.

\* Jackson vol.  
book 1. cap. 14.  
p. 48.

\* Hof. 2. 8.

\* Quod quisq;  
propter ceteris pe-  
nit, famam  
judicat bonum.  
B et. lib. 3.  
p. 24.

\* Job. 31. 24.  
25.

\* Col. 3. 5.  
Eph. 5. 5.

2. *In the greedy pursuit of the World.* \* When we pursue worldly wealth or worldly reputation with more vehemency than the riches of grace, or the favour of God. VVhen we have a foolish imagination, that our happiness consists in them, we prefer Earth before Heaven, broken Cisterns which can hold no water, before an ever Springing Fountain of glory and bliss: And, as tho there were a defect in God, cannot be content with him as our portion, without an addition of something inferior to him: VVhen we make it our hopes and say to the wedge *thou art my Confidence*; and rejoyce more because it is great, and because *our hand hath gotten much*, than in the privilege of Communion with God and the promise of an everlasting fruition of him. \* This is so gross, that *Job* joyns it with the *Idoltry* of the *Sun* and *Moon*, which he purgeth himself of, ver. 26. And the *Apostle* when he mentions *Covetousness* or *Covetous men*, passes it not over without the title of *Idoltry* to the vice, and *Idolater* to the person: \* In that it is a preferring Clay and Dirt as an end more desirable than the original of all goodness, in regard of affection and dependence.

3. *In a strong addictedness to sensual pleasures*, Phil. 3. 19. VVho make their belly their God; subjecting the truths of God to the maintenance of their Luxury. In debasing the higher faculties to project for the satisfaction of the sensitive appetite as their chief happiness, whereby many render themselves no better than a rout of sublimated brutes among men, and gross Atheists to God. VVhen mens thoughts run also upon inventing new methods to satisfy their bestial appetite, forsaking the pleasures which are to be had in God, which are the delights of Angels for the satisfaction of brutes: This is an open and unquestionable refusal of God for our end, when our rest is in them, as if they were the chief good, and not God.

\* Hab. 1. 16.

4. *In paying a service upon any success in the World, to Instruments more than to God the sovereign Author.* VVhen they Sacrifice to their Net, and burn incense to their Drag. \* Not that the *Assyrian* did offer a Sacrifice to his arms, but ascrib'd to them, what was due only to God, and appropriated the Victory to his forces and arms. The Prophet alludeth to those that worshipped their VVarlike Instruments, whereby they had attained great Victories; and those Artificers who worshipped the Tools by which they had purchased great wealth, in the stead of God; preferring them as the causes of their happiness before God who governs the world.

And are not our affections, upon the receiving of good things, more closely fixed to the Instruments of Conveyance, than to the chief benefactor, from whose Coffers they are taken? Do we not more delight in them and hug them, with a greater indearedness; as if all our happiness depended on them, and God were no more than a bare spectator? Just as if when a Man were warmed by a beam, he should adore that and not admire the *sun*, that darts it out upon him.

5. *In paying a respect to Man more than God.* VVhen in a publick attendance on his service, we will not laugh, or be garish, because Men see us: But our hearts shall be in a ridiculous posture, playing with Feathers and trifling fancies, tho God see us;



as tho our happiness consisted in the pleasing of Men, and our misery in a respect to God: There is no fool that faith *in his heart* there is *no God*; but he sets up something in his heart *as a God*.

This is.

1. *A debasing of God.* 1. *In setting up a Creature.* It speaks God less amiable than the Creature, short of those perfections, which some silly sordid thing which hath engrossed their affections, is possessed with: As if the cause of all being could be transcended by his Creature, and a vile lust could equal, yea, surmount the Loveliness of God: Tis to say to God as the rich to the poor, James 2.3. *Stand thou there or sit here under my foot-stool*: Tis to sink him below the mire of the world, to order him to come down from his glorious throne, and take his place below a contemptible Creature, which in regard of its infinite distance is not to be compared with him. It strips God of the love that is due to him by the right of his nature and the greatness of his Dignity; and of the trust that is due to him, as the first cause and the chiefest good, as tho he were too feeble and mean to be our blessedness. This is intolerable, to make that which is Gods foot-stool, the Earth, to climb up into his throne; to set that in our heart which God hath made even below our selves and put under our feet; to make that which we trample upon, to dispose of the right God hath to our hearts; \* Tis worse than if a *Queen* should fall in love with the little *Image* of the Prince in the Palace, and slight the beauty of his person; and as if people should adore the foot-steps of a King in the dirt, and turn their backs upon his presence.

\* Nuremberg  
de adorat. p. 30.

2. *It doth more debase him to set up a sin, a lust, a carnal affection, as our chief end.* To steal away the Honour due to God, and appropriate it to that which is no work of his hands, to that which is loathsome in his sight, hath disturbed his rest, and wrung out his just breath to kindle a Hell for its Eternal lodging, a God dishonouring and a Soul Murdering lust, is worse than to prefer *Barabbas* before Christ. The baser the thing, the worse is the injury to him with whom we would associate it. If it were some generous principle, a thing useful to the world, that we place in an equality with, or a superiority above him; tho it were a vile usage, yet it were not altogether so Criminal: But to gratifie some unworthy appetite, with the displeasure of the Creator, something below the rational nature of Man, much more infinitely below the excellent Majesty of God, is a more unworthy usage of him. To advance one of the most vertuous Nobles in a Kingdom as a mark of our service and subjection, is not so dishonourable to a despised Prince, as to take a Scabby Begger, or a rotten Carcass to place in his throne. Creeping things, abominable beasts, the *Egyptian Idols*, Cats and Crocodiles, were greater abominations, and a greater despite done to God, than the *Image of Jealousy* at the gate of the *Altar*. \*

\* Ezck. 8. 5, 6,  
10.

And let not any excuse themselves, that tis but one lust or one Creature which is preferred as the end: Is not he an Idolater that worships the Sun or Moon, one Idol, as well as he that worships the whole host of Heaven?

The inordinacy of the heart to one lust may imply a stronger contempt of him, than if a Legion of lusts did possess the heart. \* It argues a greater disesteem, when he shall be slighted for a single vanity. The depth of *Esau's prophaneness* in contemning *his birth right*, and God in it, is aggravated by his selling it for *one morsel of meat*, \* and that none of the daintiest, none of the costliest, *a mess of pottage*; implying, had he parted with it at a greater rate, it had been more tolerable, and his prophaness more excusable. And it is reckoned as a high aggravation of the Corruption of the Israelite Judges, Amos 2. 6. *That they sold the poor for a pair of shoes*; That is, that they would betray the cause of the poor for a bribe of no greater value, than might purchase them a pair of shoes. To place any one thing as our chief end, tho never so light, doth not excuse: He that will not stick to break with God for a trifle, a small pleasure, will leap the hedge upon a greater temptation.

\* Heb. 12. 16.

Nay, and if wealth, riches, friends, and the best thing in the world, our own lives be preferred before God, as our chief happiness and end but one moment, tis an infinite wrong; because the infinite goodness and excellency of God is denied: As tho the Creature or lust we love, or our own life which we prefer in that short moment before him, had a goodness in it self, superior to, and more desirable than the



the Blessedness in God : \* And though it should be but one Minute, and a Man in all the Periods of his days both before and after that Failure, should actually and intentionally prefer God before all other things ; yet he doth him an infinite wrong, because God in every moment is infinitely good, and absolutely desirable, and can never cease to be good, and cannot have the least shadow or change in him and his Perfections.

2. 'Tis a denying of God.

*Job. 31. 26, 27, 28. If I beheld the Sun when it shined, and the Moon walking in its Brightness, and my Heart hath been secretly enticed, or my Mouth hath kiss my Hand; this also were Iniquity to be punished by the Judge; for I should have denyed the Lord above.* This Denial of God is not only the act of an open Idolater, but the consequent of a secret confidence, and immoderate joy in worldly Goods : This Denial of God is to be referred to *v. 24. 25.* When a man saith to Gold, *thou art my confidence*, and rejoices because his wealth is great ; he denies that God which is Superior to all those, and the proper Object of Trust : Both Idolatries are coupled here together ; that which hath Wealth, and that which hath those glorious Creatures in Heaven for its Object : And though some may think it a light Sin, yet the Crime being of deeper guilt, a denial of God, deserves a severer punishment, and falls under the Sentence of the just Judge of all the Earth ; under that Notion ; which *Job* intimates in those words ; *this also were an Iniquity to be punished by the Judge.*

The *kissing the hand*, to the Sun, Moon or any Idol, was an external Sign of Religious Worship among those and other Nations : This is far less than an inward hearty Confidence, and an affectionate Trust : If the motion of the hand be, much more is the affection of the heart to an excrementitious Creature, or a brutish Pleasure is a Denial of God, and a kind of an Abjuring of him, since the Supreme Affection of the Soul is undoubtedly and solely the Right of the Sovereign Creator, and not to be given in common to others, as the outward gesture may in a way of civil respect. Nothing that is an Honour peculiar to God, can be given to a Creature, without a plain exclusion of God to be God ; it being a disowning the rectitude and excellency of his Nature. If God should command a Creature such a Love, and such a Confidence in any thing inferior to him ; He would deny himself his own Glory ; He would deny himself to be the most excellent Being. Can the *Romanists* be free from this, when they call the Cross *Spem unicam*, and say to the Virgin, *In te Domina speravi*, as *Bonaventure*, &c.

Good reason therefore have Worldlings and Sensualists, persons of immoderate fondness to any thing in the world, to reflect upon themselves ; since though they own the Being of a God, they are guilty of so great disrespect to him, that cannot be excused from the title of an unworthy Atheism : And those that are renewed by the Spirit of God, may here see ground of a daily Humiliation for the frequent and too common Excursions of their Souls in Creature Confidences and Affections, whereby they fall under the charge of an act of practical Atheism, though they may be free from an habit of it.

3. The third thing is, *Man would make himself the end of all Creatures.* Man would sit in the Seat of God, and set his heart as the heart of God, as the Lord saith of *Tyrus Ezek. 28. 2.* What is the consequence of this ; but to be esteemed the chief Good, and end of other Creatures ? A thing, that the heart of God cannot but be set upon, it being an inseparable Right of the Deity ; who must deny himself, if he deny this affection of the Heart.

Since it is the nature of Man deriv'd from his Root, to desire to be equal with God ; it follows that he desires no Creature should be equal with him, but subservient to his ends and his glory. He that would make himself God, would have the Honour proper to God : He that thinks himself worthy of his own supreme affection, thinks himself worthy to be the Object of the supreme affection of others : Whosoever counts himself the chiefest Good and last End, would have the same place in the thoughts of others. Nothing is more natural to Man, than a desire to have his own Judgment, the Rule and Measure of the Judgments and Opinions of the rest of Mankind. He that sets himself in the Place of the Prince, doth by that act challenge all the Prerogatives and Dues belonging to the Prince ; and apprehending himself fit to be a King, apprehends himself also worthy of the Homage and Fealty

of



of the Subjects. He that loves himself chiefly, and all other things and persons for himself, would make himself the end of all Creatures. It hath not been once or twice only in the World, that some vain Princes have assumed to themselves the title of Gods, and caused Divine Adorations to be given to them, and Altars to smoke with Sacrifices for their Honour: What hath been practised by one, is by Nature seminal-ly in all: We would have all pay an Obedience to us, and give to us the Esteem that is due to God.

This is evident,

1. *In Pride.* When we entertain an high Opinion of our selves, and act for our own Reputes, we dispossess God from our own hearts; and while we would have our Fame to be in every mans mouth, and be admired in the hearts of men, we would chase God out of the hearts of others, and deny his Glory a Residence any where else; that our Glory should reside more in their minds than the Glory of God; that their thoughts should be filled with our Achievements, more than the Works and Excellency of God, with our Image and not with the Divine. Pride would paramount God in the affections of others, and juggle God out of their Souls; and by the same reason that man doth thus in the Place where he lives, he would do so in the whole world, and press the whole Creation from the Service of their true Lord, to his own Service. Every proud man would be counted by others as he counts himself; the highest, chiefest piece of Goodness; and be adored by others, as much as he adores and admires himself. No proud man in his self-love, and self-admiration, thinks himself in an Error; and if he be worthy of his own admiration, he thinks himself worthy of the highest esteem of others; that they should value him above themselves, and value themselves only for him. What did *Nebuchadnezzar* intend, by setting up a Golden Image, and commanding all his Subjects to worship it, upon the highest Penalty he could inflict; but that all should aim only at the pleasing his Humor?

2. *In using the Creatures contrary to the End God has appointed.* God created the World and all things in it, as steps whereby men might ascend to a Prospect of him, and the acknowledgment of his Glory; and we would use them to dishonour God, and gratifie our selves: He appointed them to supply our necessities, and support our rational delights; and we use them to cherish our sinful lusts. We wring groans from the Creature in diverting them from their true scope, to one of our own fixing, when we use them not in his service, but purely for our own, and turn those things he created for himself to be instruments of Rebellion against him to serve our turns; and hereby endeavour to defeat the ends of God in them, to establish our own ends by them: This is a high dishonour to God, a sacrilegious undermining of his Glory; \* to reduce what God hath made to serve our own glory, and our own pleasure: It perverts the whole Order of the World, and directs it to another end than what God hath constituted; to another intention contrary to the intention of God; and thus Man makes himself a God by his own Authority. As all things were made by God, so they are for God: but while we aspire to the end of the Creation, we deny and envy God the honour of being Creator. We cannot make our selves the chief end of the Creatures against Gods Order, but we imply thereby, that we were their first Principle: For if we lived under a sense of the Creator of them while we enjoy them for our use, we should return the glory to the right Owner.

\* Sabunde Tit.  
200. P. 352

This is *Diabolical*; though the Devil for his first affecting an Authority in Heaven, has been hurled down from the State of an Angel of Light, into that of Darkness, Vileness and Misery, to be the most accursed Creature living; yet he still aspires to mate God, contrary to the knowledge of the impossibility of success in it; Neither the terrors he feels, nor the future torments he doth expect, do a jot abate his Ambition to be Competitor with his Creator. How often hath he since his first sin, arrogated to himself the Honour of a God from the blind world, and attempted to make the Son of God by a particular Worship, count him as the *chiefest Good and Benefactor of the World*? \* Since all men by Nature are the Devils Children, the Serpents Seed, they have something of this Venom in their Natures, as well as others of his qualities. We see that there may be, and is a prodigious Atheism lurking under the Belief of a God. The Devil knows there is a God, but acts like an Atheist, and so do his Children.

\* Mat. 4. 3



\* Pascal Pens. 5.  
30. P. 294.

\* Phil. 2. 6.

4. *Man would make himself the end of God.* This necessarily follows upon the former: Whosoever makes himself his own Law and his own End in the place of God, would make God the Subject in making himself the Sovereign: He that steps into the Throne of a Prince, sets the Prince at his Foot-stool; and while he assumes the Princes Prerogative, demands a Subjection from him. The Order of the Creation, has been inverted by the entrance of Sin. \* God implanted an affection in Man with a double aspect, the one to pitch upon God, the other to respect our selves; but with this proviso, that our affection to God should be infinite, in regard of the Object and Center in him, as the chiefest Happiness and highest End: Our affections to our selves should be finite, and refer ultimately to God as the Original of our Being: But Sin hath turned Mans affections wholly to himself: Whereas he should love God first, and himself in order to God; he now loves himself first, and God in order to himself: Love to God is lost, and Love to *self* hath usurpt the Throne. As God by Creation put all things under the feet of Man, \* reserving the Heart for himself; Man by Corruption hath dispossessed God of his Heart, and put him under his own feet. We often intend our selves, when we pretend the Honour of God, and make God and Religion a Stale to some designs we have in hand; our Creator a Tool for our own ends.

This is evident,

1. *In our loving God, because of some self-pleasing benefits distributed by him.* There is in Men, a kind of natural love to God; but it is but a secondary one, because God gives them the good things of this world, spreads their Table, fills their Cup, stuffs their Coffers, and doth them some good turns by unexpected Providences: This is not an affection to God for the unbounded Excellency of his own Nature, but for his beneficence, as he opens his hand for them; an affection to themselves, and those Creatures, their Gold, thier honour, which their hearts are most fixed upon; without a strong Spiritual Inclination that God should be glorified by them in the use of those Mercies. 'Tis rather a disowning of God, than any love to him; because it postpones God to those things they love him for. This would appear to be no love, if God should cease to be their Benefactor, and deal with them as a Judge; if he should change his outward smiles into afflicting frowns; and not only shut his hand, but strip them of what he sent them. The Motive of their love being expired, the affection raised by it, must cease for want of fuel to feed it: So that God is beholden to sordid Creatures, of no value, (but as they are his Creatures) for most of the Love the Sons of Men pretend to him. The Devil spake truth of most men, though not of *Job*, when he said, *Job. 1. 10. They love not God for nought*; but while he makes a hedge about them and their Families, whilst he blesteth the works of their hands, and increaseth their honour in the Land. 'Tis like *Peter's* sharp reproof of his Master, when he spake of the ill usage, even to death, he was to meet with at *Jerusalem*; *This shall not be unto thee*: It was as much out of love to himself, as zeal for his Masters Interest, knowing his Master could not be in such a Storm without some drops lighting upon himself. All the Apostacies of men in the world are Witnesses to this: They fawn whilst they may have a prosperous Profession, but will not bear one chip of the Cross for the Interest of God: They would partake of his Blessings, but not endure the prick of a Lance for him: As those that admired the Miracles of our Saviour, and shrunk at his Sufferings. A time of tryal discovers these Mercenary Souls to be more Lovers of themselves than their Maker. This is a pretended love of friendship to God, but a real love to a Lust, only to gain by God: A good mans temper is contrary: *Quench Hell, burn Heaven* said a holy Man, *I will love and fear my God.*

2. 'Tis evident; in abstinence from some sins; not because they offend God, but because they are against the Interest of some other beloved Corruption, or a Bar to something men hunt after in the World. When temperance is cherished, not to honour God, but preserve a crazy Carcase: Prodigality forsaken, out of a humor of Avarice: Uncleaness forsaken, not out of a hatred of Lust, but love to their money: Declining a Denial of the Interest and Truth of God, not out of affection to them, but an ambitious Zeal for their own Reputation. There is a kind of Conversion from Sin, when God is not made the Term of it, *Jer. 4. 1. If thou wilt return O Israel, return unto me saith the Lord.* \* When we forbear Sin as Dogs do the Meat they

\* Trap on Gen.  
24. 148.



they love; they forbear not out of a hatred of the Carrion, but fear of the Gad-gel: These are as wicked in their abstaining from Sin, as others are in their furious committing it. Nothing of the Honour of God and the End of his appointments is indeed in all this, but the conveniences *self* gathers from them. Again, many of the motives the generality of the world uses to their Friends and Relations to draw them from Vices, are drawn from *self*, and used to prop up natural or sinful *self* in them: Come, reform your self, take other courses, you will ruin your Reputation and be despicable; you will destroy your Estate and commence a Beggar; your Family will be undone, and you may rot in a Prison: Not laying close to them the Duty they owe to God, the Dishonour which accrues to him by their unworthy courses, and the ingratitude to the God of their mercies: Not that the other motives are to be laid aside and slighted: *Mint and Cummin* may be tithed, but the weightier concerns are not to be omitted: But this shews that *self* is the Byas, not only of men in their own course, but in their dealings with others: What should be subordinate to the Honour of God, and the Duty we owe to him, is made superior.

3. 'Tis evident, *In performing Duties merely for a selfish Interest*: Making our selves the End of Religious Actions, paying a Homage to that, while we pretend to render it to God, *Zach. 7. 5. Did you at all fast unto me, even unto me?* Things ordained by God may fall in with carnal ends affected by our selves; and then Religion is not kept up by any interest of God in the Conscience, but the interest of *self* in the Heart: We then sanctifie not the Name of God in the Duty, but gratifie our selves: God may be the Object, *self* is the End; and a Heavenly Object is made subservient to a Carnal Design. Hypocrisie passes a Complement on God, and is called Flattery, *Psal. 78. 36. They did flatter him with their lips, &c.* They gave him a parcel of good words for their own preservation. Flattery in the old Notion among the Heathens, is a Vice more peculiar to serve our own turn and purvey for the Belly: They knew they could not subsist without God, and therefore gave him a parcel of good words, that he might spare them, and make Provision for them. *Israel is an empty Vine,\* a Vine say some, with large Branches and few Clusters, but brings forth Fruit to himself;* while they *professed Love to God* with their lips: It was, that God should promote their covetous designs, and preserve their Wealth and Grandeur: \* In which respect, an Hypocrite may be well termed a Religious Atheist, an Atheist maskt with Religion. The chief Arguments which prevail with many men to perform some Duties and appear Religious, are the same that *Hamor and Shechem* used to the people of their City to submit to Circumcision, *viz. the ingrossing of more Wealth, Gen. 34. 21, 22. If every Male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised, shall not their Cattel and their Substance, and every Beast of theirs be ours?*

\* Hof. 10. 1.

\* Ezek. 33-31.

This is seen,

1. *In unweildiness to Religious Duties, where self is not concern'd.* With what lively thoughts will many approach to God, when a Revenue may be brought in to support their own ends? But when the Concerns of God only are in it, the Duty is not the Delight, but the Clogg; such feeble Devotions that warm not the Soul, unless there be something of *self* to give strength and heat to them. *Jonah* was sick of his work, and run from God, because he thought he should get no honour by his *Message*; *Gods Mercy would discredit his Prophecy.\** Thoughts of disadvantage, cut the very sinews of service. You may as well perswade a Merchant to venture all his Estate upon the inconstant Waves without hopes of Gain, as prevail with a natural man to be serious in Duty, without expectation of some warm Advantage. *What profit should we have if we pray to him?* is the natural Question, *Job. 21. 15. What profit shall I have if I be cleansed from my Sin?* *Job. 35. 3. I shall have more good by my sin than by my service.* 'Tis for God that I dance before the Ark, saith *David*, therefore I will be more vile, *2 Sam. 6. 2.* 'Tis for *self* that I pray saith a natural Man, therefore I will be more Warm and quick. Ordinances of God are observed only as a point of interest, and Prayer is often most fervent, when it is least Godly, and most selfish: Carnal End and Affections, will pour out lively Expressions. If there be no delight in the means that lead to God, there is no delight in God himself: Because Love is *appetitus unionis*, a desire of Union; and where

\* Johuah 4. 2.



the Object is desireable, the means that brings us to it would be delightful too.

2. *In calling upon God only in a time of necessity.* How officious will men be in affliction, to that God whom they neglect in their Prosperity? *When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and inquired after God, and they remembered that God was their Rock,* Plal. 78. 34. They remembered him under the Scourge, and forgate him under his Smiles: They visit the Throne of Grace, knock loud at Heavens Gates, and give God no rest for their early and importunate Devotions when under Distress: But when their desires are answered, and the Rod removed; they stand aloof from him, and rest upon their own bottom, as *Jer. 2. 31. We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee.* When we have need of him, he shall find us Clients at his Gate; and when we have served our turn, he hears no more of us: Like *Noahs* Dove sent out of the Ark, that returned to him when she found no rest on the Earth, but came not back when she found a footing else where. How often do men apply themselves to God, when they have some business for him to do for them? And then too, they are loath to put it solely into his hand, to manage it for his own honour; but they presume to be his Directors, that he may manage it for their glory. Self spurrs men on to the Throne of Grace; they desire to be furnisht with some Mercy they want, or to have the Clouds of some Judgments which they fear, blown over: This is not affection to God, but to our selves: As the *Romans* worshipped a *Quartane Ague* as a Goddess, and *Timorem & Pallorem*, Fear and Paleness, as Gods; not out of any affection they had to the Disease or the Passion, but for fear to receive any hurt by them.

Again, when we have gained the Mercy we need, how little do we warm our Souls with the consideration of that God that gave it, or lay out the Mercy in his service? We are importunate to have him our friend in our necessities, and are ungratefully careless of him, and his injuries, he suffers by us or others: When he hath discharged us from the Rock where we stuck, we leave him, as having no more need of him, and able to do well enough without him: As if we were petty Gods our selves, and only wanted a lift from him at first: This is not to glorifie God as God, but as our Servant; not an honouring of God, but a self seeking: He would hardly begg at Gods door, if he could pleasure himself without him.

3. *In begging his Assistance to our own Projects.* When we lay the Plot of our own Affairs, and then come to God, not for Counsel but Blessing; Self only shall give us counsel how to act; but because we believe there is a God that governs the world, we will desire him to contribute success. God is not consulted with, till the Counsel of self be fixed; then God must be the Executor of our Will: Self must be the Principal, and God the Instrument to hatch what we have contrived. 'Tis worse when we beg of God to favour some sinful Aim; the *Psalmist* implies this, *Plal. 66. 18. If I regard Iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* Iniquity regarded as the aim in Prayer, renders the Prayer successless, and the Suppliant an Atheist, in debasing God to back his Lust by his holy Providence.

The Disciples had determined Revenge; and because they could not act it without their Master, they would have him be their Second in their vindictive passion, *Luke 9. 55. Call for fire from Heaven.*

We scarce seek God, till we have modell'd the whole Contrivance in our own Brains, and resolv'd upon the Methods of Performance; as though there were not a fullness of Wisdom in God to guide us in our resolves, as well as Power to breath Success upon them.

4. *In impatience upon the refusal of our desires.* How often do mens Spirits rise against God, when he steps not in with the Assistance they want? If the glory of God sway'd more with them than their private interest, they would let God be Judge of his own glory, and rather magnifie his Wisdom, than complain of his want of Goodness: Selfish hearts will charge God with neglect of them, if he be not as quick in their supplies as they are in their desires; like those in *Isa. 58. 3. Wherefore have we fasted say they, and thou seest not; wherefore have we afflicted our Souls and thou takest no knowledge?* When we aim at Gods glory in our importunities, we shall fall down in humble Submissions when he denies us; whereas self riseth up in bold Expostulations, as if God were our Servant, and had neglected the service he



he owed us, not to come at our call. We over-value the satisfactions of *self* above the honour of God. Besides, if what we desire be a sin, our impatience at a refusal is more intolerable: 'Tis an anger, that God will not lay aside his holiness to serve our corruption.

5. *In the actual aims men have in their Duties.* In Prayer for temporal things, when we desire Health for our own ease, Wealth for our own sensuality, Strength for our revenge, Children for the increase of our Family, Gifts for our applause, as *Simon Magus* did the Holy-Ghost, or; when some of those ends are aimed at: This is to desire God not to serve himself of us, but to be a Servant to our worldly interest, our vain glory, the greatning of our names, &c. In spiritual mercies begged for; When pardon of sin is desired only for our own security from eternal Vengeance; Sanctification desired only to make us fit for everlasting blessedness; Peace of Conscience only that we may lead our lives more comfortably in the world; when we have not actual intentions for the glory of God, or when our thoughts of Gods honour are overtopped by the aims of self advantage: Not but that as God hath prest us to those things by motives drawn from the Blessedness derived to our selves by them, so we may desire them with a respect to our selves; but this respect must be contained within the due banks, in subordination to the glory of God, not above it, nor in an equal ballance with it. \* That which is nourishing or medicinal in the first or second degree, is in the fourth or fifth degree meer destructive poyson.

Gurnall. Part. 3.  
Pag. 337.

Let us consider it seriously; though a Duty be heavenly, doth not some base end smut us in it?

[ 1. ] *How is it with our Confessions of Sin?* Are they not more to procure our Pardon, than to shame our selves before God, or to be freed from the chains that hinder us from bringing him the glory for which we were created; or more to partake of his benefits, than to honour him in acknowledging the rights of his Justice? Do we not bewail sin as it hath ruined us, not as it opposed the Holiness of God? Do we not shuffle with God, and confess one sin, while we reserve another; as if we would allure God by declaring our dislike of one, to give us liberty to commit Wantonness with another; not to abhor our selves, but to daub with God?

2. Is it any better in our private and Family Worship? Are not such Assemblies frequented by some, where some upon whom they have a dependance may eye them, and have a better opinion of them, and affection to them? If God were the sole end of our hearts; would they not be as glowing under the sole eye of God, as our tongues or carriages are seemingly serious under the eye of man? Are not Family duties performed by some that their voices may be heard, and their reputation supported among Godly Neighbours?

[ 3. ] *Is not the Charity of many men tainted with this end self?* \* as the Pharisees were, while they set the miserable Object before them, but not the Lord; bestowing Alms, not so much upon the necessities of the people, as the friendship we owe them for some particular respects: Or casting our bread upon those Waters which stream down in the sight of the world, that our Doles may be visible to them and commended by them: Or when we think to oblige God to pardon our transgressions; as if we merited it and Heaven too at his hands, by bestowing a few pence upon indigent persons. And

\* Mat. 6. 1.

[ 4. ] *Is it not the same with the Reproofs of men?* Is not Heat and Anger carried out with full Sail when our worldly interest is prejudic'd, and becalm'd in the concerns of God? Do not many Masters reprove their Servants with more vehemency for the neglect of their Trade and Business, than the neglect of Divine Duties; and that upon Religious Arguments, pretending the honour of God that they may mind their own interest? But when they are negligent in what they owe to God, no noise is made, they pass without rebuke. Is not this to make God and Religion a Stale to their own ends? 'Tis a part of Atheism, not to regard the injuries done to God, as *Tiberius*\*; Let Gods wrongs be looked to or cared for by himself.

\* Dei injuria  
Deo cura.

[ 5. ] *Is it not thus in our seeming Zeal for Religion?* As *Demetrius*, and the Craftsmen at *Ephesus* cried up aloud the greatness of *Diana of the Ephesians*; not out of any true zeal they had for her, but their gain, which was increased by the con-

flu-



fluence of her Worshippers, and the Sale of her own Shrines, Acts 19. 24. 28.

4. *In making use of the Name of God to countenance our Sin.* When we set up an opinion that is a Friend to our lusts, and then dig deep into the *Scripture* to find Crutches to support it, and authorize our practices: When men will thank God for what they have got by unlawful means, *Fathering* the fruit of their cheating craft, and the simplicity of their Chapmen upon God: Crediting their Couzenage by his Name, as men do brass money, with a thin plate of silver, and the stamp and image of the Prince. The Jews urge the Law of God for the crucifying his Son, John 19. 7. *We have a Law, and by that Law he is to dye:* And would make him a Party in their private Revenge. \* Thus often when we have faltered in some actions, we wipe our mouths, as if we sought God more than our own interest, prostituting the sacred Name and Honour of God, either to hatch or defend some unworthy lust against his Word.

\* *Sana. 12. 8.*  
Part. 2. P. 152.

Is not all this a high degree of Atheism?

1. *'Tis avilifying God,* an abuse of the highest good: Other sins subject the Creature and outward things to them; but acting in Religious services for *self*, subjects not only the highest concerns of mens Souls, but the Creator himself to the Creature: Nay, to make God contribute to that which is the pleasure of the Devil: A greater slight, than to cast the gifts of a Prince to a Herd of nasty Swine. It were more excusable to serve our selves of God upon the higher accounts, such that materially conduce to his glory; but it is an intolerable wrong, to make Him and his Ordinances Caterers for our own bellies, as they did\*: They sacrificed the נִכְיֹחַ of which the Offerer might eat; not out of any reference to God, but love to their Gluttony; not to please him, but feast themselves. The Belly was truly made the God, when God was served only in order to the Belly: As though the blessed God had his Being, and his Ordinances were enjoined to pleasure their foolish and wanton Appetites: As though the Work of God were only to patronize unrighteous ends, and be as bad as themselves, and become a *Pander* to their corrupt affections.

\* Hof. 8. 13.  
Vid. Cocc. in  
locum.

2. Because it is a vilifying of God, *It is an undecifying or dethroning God.* 'Tis an acting, as if we were the Lords, and God our Vassal: A setting up those secular ends in the place of God, who ought to be our ultimate end in every action; to whom a glory is as due, as his mercy to us is utterly unmerited by us. He that thinks to cheat, and put the Fool upon God by his pretences, doth not heartily believe there is such a Being. He could not have the Notion of a God, without that of Omniscience and Justice; an eye to see the cheat, and an Arm to punish it: The Notion of the one would direct him in the manner of his Services, and the Sense of the other would scare him from the cherishing his unworthy ends. He that serves God with a sole respect to himself, is prepared for any Idolatry; his Religion shall warp with the times and his interest; he shall deny the true God for an Idol, when his worldly interest shall advise him to it; and pay the same Reverence to the basest Image, which he pretends now to pay to God: As the *Israelites* were as real for Idolatry under their basest Princes, as they were Pretenders to the true Religion under those that were Pious.

Before I come to the use of this, give me leave to evince this practical Atheism by two other Considerations.

1. *Unworthy Imaginations of God.*

*The Fool hath said in his heart there is no God:* That is, he is not such a God as you report him to be: This is meant by their being *corrupt*, in the 2. v. corrupt being taken for playing the Idolaters, *Exod. 32. 7.* We cannot comprehend God; if we could, we should cease to be finite; and because we cannot comprehend him, we erect strange Images of him in our fancies and affections. And since guilt came upon us, because we cannot root out the Notions of God, we would debase the Majesty and Nature of God, that we may have some ease in our Consciences, and lye down with some comfort in the sparks of our own kindling.

Phil. 1. 4.

This is universal in men by Nature. *God is not in all his thoughts:*\* Not in any of his thoughts according to the excellency of his Nature, and greatness of his Majesty. As the Heathen did not glorify God as God, so neither do they conceive of



of God as God: They are all infected with some one or other ill opinion of him, thinking him not so holy, powerful, just, good as he is, and as the natural force of a human understanding might arrive to. VVe joyn a new Notion of God in our vain fancies, and represent him not as he is, but as we would have him to be, fit for our own use, and suited to our own pleasure: VVe set that active power of imagination on work, and there comes out a God, (*a Calf*) whom we own for a Notion of God.

*Adam* cast him into so narrow a mould, as to think that himself, who had newly sprouted up by his Almighty power, was fit to be his Corrivall in knowledge, and had vain hopes to grasp as much as infiniteness: If he in his first declining begun to have such a conceit, tis no doubt but we have as bad under a mass of Corruption. VVhen holy *Agur* speaks of God, he cries out that he had not *the understanding of a Man, nor the knowledge of the holy*: \* He did not think rationally of God as Man might by his strength at his first Creation. There are as many Carved Images of God as there are minds of Men, and as monstrous shapes as those Corruptions, into which they would transform him. \* *Pro. 30.2.3.*

Hence sprang,

1. *Idoltry. Vain Imaginations* first set afloat and kept up this in the world. \* Vain Imaginations of the God *whose glory they changed into the Image of corruptible Man*: They had set up vain Images of him in their fancy, before they set up Idolatrous representations of him in their Temples; The likening him to those Idols of Wood and Stone, and various metals, were the fruit of an Idea Erected in their own minds: This is a mighty debasing the Divine nature, and rendring him no better, than that base and stupid matter they make the visible object of their adoration; equaling him with those base Creatures they think worthy to be the representations of him. Yet how far did this Crime spread it self in all Corners of the world, not only among the more barbarous and Ignorant, but the more polisht and Civilized Nations? *Judea* only, where God had placed the Ark of his presence, being free from it, in some intervals of time only after some sweeping Judgment. And tho they vomited up their Idols under some sharp scourge, they licked them up again after the Heavens were cleared over their Heads: The whole book of *Judges* makes mention of it. And tho an Evangelicall light hath chased that Idolatry away from a great part of the world: yet the Principle remaining, Coyns more Spiritual Idols in the heart, which are brought before God in acts of Worship. \* *Rom. 1.23.*

2. *Hence all superstition received its rise and growth.* When we Mint a God according to our own Complexion, like to us in mutable and various passions, soon angry and soon appeased, tis no wonder that we invent ways of pleasing him after we have offended him; and think to expiate the sin of our Souls, by some Melancholy devotions and self Chastisements. Superstition is nothing else but an unscriptural and unrevealed *dread of God*. \* When they imagined him a rigorous and severe Master, they cast about for ways to mitigate him whom they thought so hard to be pleased: A very mean thought of him, as if a slight and pompous Devotion could as easily bribe and flatter him out of his rigors, as a few good words or baubling rattles could please and quiet little Children; And whatsoever pleased us, could please a God infinitely above us. Such narrow concepts had the *Philistins*, when they thought to still the anger of the God of *Israel*, whom they thought they possess'd in the Ark, with the present of a few *Golden mice*. \* All the Superstition this day living in the world is built upon this foundation: So natural it is to Man to pull God down to his own Imaginations, rather than raise his Imaginations up to God. Hence doth arise also the distrust of his mercy, tho they repent; measuring God by the contracted Models of their own Spirits; as tho his nature were as difficult to Pardon their offences against him as they are to remit wrongs done to themselves. \* *David Psal. 137.*

3. *Hence Springs all Presumption, the Common disease of the world.* All the wickedness in the World, which is nothing else but presuming upon God, rises from the ill interpretations of the goodness of God, breaking out upon them in the works of Creation and Providence: The Corruption of Mans nature engendred by those Notions of goodness a monstrous birth of vain imaginations. Not of themselves primarily, but of God; whence arose all that folly and darkness in their minds and conversations, *Rom. 1. 20. 21.* They glorified him yet as God, but according



\* Gurnal p. 171  
2. p. 245. 246.

to themselves, imagined him good that themselves might be bad; fancied him so indulgent, as to neglect his own honour for their sensuality. How doth the unclean person represent him to his own thoughts, but as a Goat; the Murderer as a Tyger; the sensual person as a Swine; while they fancy a God indulgent to their Crimes without their repentance? As the Image on the Seal is stamp'd upon the wax, so the thoughts of the heart are Printed upon the actions. Gods Patience is apprehended to be an approbation of their Vices, and from the Consideration of his forbearance, they fashion a God that they believe will smile upon their Crimes: They imagine a God that plays with them; and tho he threatens, doth it only to scare, but means not as he speaks: A God they fancy like themselves, that would do as they would do, not be angry for what they count a light offence, Psal. 50. 21. *Thou thoughtest I was such a one as thy self*: That God and they were exactly alike as two Tallies. \* [Our wilful misapprehensions of God are the cause of our misbehaviour in all his worship: Our slovenly and lazy services tell him to his face what slight thoughts and apprehensions we have of him]

Compare these two together.

Superstition ariseth from terrifying misapprehensions of God: Presumption from self pleasing thoughts: One represents him only rigorous, and the other careless: One makes us over officious in serving him by our own rules; and the other over bold in offending him, according to our humors. The want of a true Notion of Gods Justice makes some Men slight him: And the want of a true apprehension of his goodness makes others too servile in their approaches to him: One makes us careless of duties, and the other makes us look on them rather as Physick than food; an unsupportable pittance, than a desirable privilege. In this Case, Hell is the principle of Duty performed to Heaven. The superstitious Man believes God hath scarce mercy to Pardon; the presumptuous Man believes he hath no such perfection as Justice to punish. The one makes him insignificant to what he desires, kindness and goodness; the other renders him insignificant to what he fears, his vindictive Justice: What between the Idolater, the superstitious, the presumptuous person, God should look like no God in the world.

These unworthy imaginations of God are likewise,

*A vilifying of him*: Debasing the Creator, to be a Creature of their own fancies; putting their own stamp upon him; and fashioning him not according to that beautiful Image he impress'd upon them by Creation; but the defaced Image they inherit by their fall, and which is worse, the Image of the Devil which spread it self over them at their revolt and apostacy. Were it possible to see a Picture of God, according to the fancies of Men, it would be the most Monstrous being, such a God that never was, nor ever can be.

VVe honour God when we have worthy opinions of him suitable to his nature; when we conceive of him as a being of unbounded loveliness and perfection: VVe detract from him when we ascribe to him such qualities as would be a horrible disgrace to a wise and good Man: As Injustice and Impurity. Thus Men debase God when they invert his order, and would Create him according to their Image, as he first Created them according to his own: And think him not worthy to be a God, unless he fully answer the mould they would cast him into, and be what is unworthy of his nature: Men do not conceive of God as he would have them; but he must be what they would have him, one of their own shaping.

1. *This is worse than Idolatry*. The grossest Idolater commits not a Crime so hainous, by changing his glory into the Image of Creeping things and senseless Creatures, as the imagining God to be as one of our sinful selves, and likening him to those filthy Images, we erect in our fancies: One makes him an earthly God, like an earthly Creature; the other fancies him an unjust and impure God, like a wicked Creature: One sets up an Image of him in the Earth, which is his footstool; the other sets up an Image of him in the heart, which ought to be his throne.

2. *Tis worse than absolute Atheism, or a denial of God*. *Dignius credimus non esse, quodcumque non ita fuerit, ut esse deberet*, was the opinion of Tertullian. \* Tis more Comendable to think him not to be, than to think him such a one as is inconsistent with his nature. Better to deny his Existence, than deny his perfection. No wise Man but would rather have his memory rot, than be accounted infamous; and would be more

\* Tertul. cont.  
Maxim. lib. 1.  
cap. 2.



more obliged to him that should deny that ever he had a Being in the world, than to say he did indeed live, but he was a Sot, a debauched Person, and a man not to be trusted. When we apprehend God deceitful in his promises, unrighteous in his threatnings, unwilling to pardon upon repentance, or resolved to pardon notwithstanding impenitency: These are things either unworthy of the Nature of God, or contrary to that Revelation he hath given of himself. Better for a man never to have been born, than be for ever miserable; so better to be thought no God, than represented impotent or negligent, unjust or deceitful; which are more contrary to the Nature of God, than Hell can be to the greatest Criminal. In this sense perhaps the *Apostle* affirms the *Gentiles*, *Eph. 2. 12.* to be such as are *without God in the World*; as being more Atheists in adoring God under such Notions, as they commonly did, than if they had acknowledged no God at all.

2. *This is evident by our natural desire to be distant from him, and unwillingness to have any acquaintance with him.* Sin set us first at a distance from God; and every new act of gross Sin estrangeth us more from him, and indisposeth us more for him: It makes us both afraid and ashamed to be near him. Sensual men were of this frame that *Job* discourseth of, *Job. 21. 7, 8, 9, and 14, and 15. verses*: Where grace reigns, the nearer to God, the more vigorous the motion; The nearer any thing approaches to us, that is the Object of our desires, the more eagerly do we press forward to it: But our blood riseth at the approaches of any thing to which we have an aversion: We have naturally a loathing of Gods coming to us or our return to him: We seek not after him as our happiness; and when he offers himself, we like it not, but put a disgrace upon him in chusing other things before him. God and we are naturally at as great a distance, as Light and Darkeness, Life and Death, Heaven and Hell. The stronger impression of God any thing hath, the more we fly from it. The glory of God in reflection upon *Moses* his face scar'd the *Israelites*; they who had desired God to speak to them by *Moses*, when they saw a signal impression of God upon his Countenance, were afraid to come near him, as they were before unwilling to come near to God\*: Not that the blessed God is in his own Nature a frightful Object; but our own guilt renders him so to us, and our selves indisposed to converse with him. As the light of the Sun is as irksome to a distemper'd eye, as it is in its own Nature desirable to a sound one. The Saints themselves have had so much frailty, that they have cried out, that they were undone, if they had any more than ordinary discoveries of God made unto them; as if they wished him more remote from them. Vileness cannot endure the splendor of Majesty, nor Guilt the glory of a Judge.

\* Exod. 34. 30.

We have naturally, (1.) *No desire of remembrance of him*, (2.) *or converse with him*, (3.) *or thorough return to him*, (4.) *or close imitation of him*: As if there were not any such Being as God in the world; or as if we wished there were none at all; so feeble and spiritless are our thoughts of the Being of a God.

(1.) *No desire for the remembrance of him.* How delightful are other things in our minds? How burdensome the Memorials of God, from whom we have our Being? With what pleasure do we contemplate the Nature of Creatures; even of Flies and Toads; while our minds tire in the search of him, who hath bestowed upon us our knowing and meditating Faculties? Though God shews himself to us in every Creature; in the meanest Weed, as well as the highest Heavens; and is more apparent in them to our reasons than themselves can be to our sense; yet though we see them, we will not behold God in them: We will view them to please our sense, to improve our reason in their natural perfections; but pass by the consideration of Gods perfections so visibly beaming from them. Thus we play the Beasts and Atheists in the very exercise of reason, and neglect our Creator to gratify our sense; as though the pleasure of that were more desirable than the knowledge of God: The desire of our Souls is not towards his Name and the Remembrance of him,\* when we set not our selves in a posture to feast our Souls with deep and serious meditations of him; have a thought of him, only by the by and away, as if we were afraid of too intimate acquaintance with him.

\* Isa. 26. 8.

Are not the thoughts of God rather our Invaders, than our Guests; seldom invited to reside and take up their home in our hearts? Have we not when they have broke in upon us, bid them depart from us,\* and warned them to come no more

\* Job. 22. 17.

upon



upon our ground; sent them packing as soon as we could, and were glad when they were gone? And when they have departed, have we not often been afraid they should return again upon us; and therefore lookt about for other inmates, things not good; or if good, infinitely below God, to possess the room of our hearts before any thoughts of him should appear again? Have we not often been glad of excuses to shake off present thoughts of him; and when we have wanted real ones, found out pretences to keep God and our hearts at a distance? Is not this a part of Atheism to be so unwilling to imploy our faculties about the giver of them, to refuse to exercise them in a way of a grateful remembrance of him; as though they were none of his gift, but our own acquisition; as though the God that truly gave them, had no right to them; and he that thinks on us every day in a way of Providence, were not worthy to be thought on by us in a way of special Remembrance?

Do not the best, that love the remembrance of him, and abhor this natural averfness, find, that when they would think of God, many things tempt them and turn them to think elsewhere? Do they not find their apprehensions too feeble, their motions too dull, and the impressions too slight? This natural Atheism is spread over humane nature.

(2.) *No desire of converse with him.* The word *remember* in the command for keeping holy the *Sabbath-Day*, including all the duties of the Day, and the choicest of our lives; implies our natural unwillingness to them, and forgetfulness of them: Gods pressing this Command with more reasons than the rest, manifests that man hath no heart for Spiritual Duties. No spiritual duty, which sets us immediately Face to Face with God; but in the attempts of it, we find naturally a resistance, from some powerful Principle; so that every one may subscribe to the speech of the *Apostle*, that *when we would do good, evil is present with them.* No reason of this can be rendred, but the natural temper of our Souls, and an affecting a distance from God under any consideration: For though our guilt first made the breach, yet this aversion to a converse with him steps up without any actual reflections upon our guilt, which may render God terrible to us as an offended Judge: Are we not often also in our attendance upon him, more pleased with the *modes* of Worship which gratifie our fancy, than to have our Souls inwardly delighted with the *Object* of Worship, himself?

This is a part of our natural Atheism. To cast such duties off by total neglect, or in part, by affecting a coldness in them; is to cast off the *Fear of the Lord*.<sup>\*</sup> *Not to call upon God, and not to know him,* are one and the same thing. *Jer. 10. 25.* Further we think there is no such Being in the world, or that he is so slight a one, that he deserves not the respect he calls for; or so impotent and poor, that he cannot supply what our necessities require.

(3.) *No desire of a thorough return to him.* The first man fled from him after his defection, though he had no refuge to fly to, but the grace of his Creator. *Cain* went from his presence, would be a Fugitive from God, rather than a Suppliant to him; when by Faith in, and application of the promised Redeemer, he might have escaped the wrath to come for his Brothers blood, and mitigated the sorrows he was justly sentenced to bear in the World. Nothing will separate prodigal Man from commoning with Swine, and make him return to his Father, but an empty Trough: Have we but husks to feed on, we shall never think of a Fathers presence. It were well if our sores and indigence would drive us to him; but when our *strength* is *devoured*, we will not *return to the Lord our God, nor seek him for all this*.<sup>\*</sup> Not his drawn Sword as a God of Judgment, nor his mighty Power as a Lord, nor his open Arms as the Lord their God, could move them to turn their eyes and their hearts towards him. The more he invites us to partake of his grace, the further we run from him to provoke his wrath: The louder God called them by his *Prophets*, the closer they stuck to their *Baal*.<sup>\*</sup> We turn our backs when he stretches out his hand, stop our ears when he lifts up his voice: We fly from him when he courts us, and shelter our selves in any bush from his merciful hand, that would lay hold upon us; nor will we set our faces towards him, till *our way be hedged up with thorns*, and not a gap left to creep out any by-way.<sup>\*</sup> Whosoever is brought to a return, puts the Holy-Ghost to the pain of striving; he is not easily brought to a spiritual subjection to

\* Job. 15. 4.

\* Hos. 7. 10.

\* Hos. 11. 2.

\* Hos. 2. 6. 7.



to God, nor perswaded to a Surrender at a Summons, but sweetly overpowered by storm, and victoriously drawn into the Arms of God: God stands ready, but the heart stands off; Grace is full of intreaties, and the Soul full of excuses: Divine love offers, and Carnal self-love rejects: Nothing so pleases us, as when we are furthest from him; as if any thing were more amiable, any thing more desirable than himself.

( 4. ) *No desire of any close imitation of him.* When our Saviour was to come as a Refiner's fire to purify the Sons of Levi, the cry is, *who shall abide the day of his coming?* Mal. 3. 2, 3. Since we are alienated from the Life of God, we desire no more naturally to live the Life of God, than a Toad or any other Animal desires to live the Life of a Man: No heart that knows God, but hath a holy ambition to imitate him. No Soul that refuseth him for a Copy, but is ignorant of his Excellency: Of this temper is all Mankind naturally. Man in Corruption is as loth to be like God in Holiness; as Adam after his Creation was desirous to be like God in Knowledge; his Posterity are like their Father, who soon turned his back upon his original Copy.

What can be worse than this? Can the denial of his Being be a greater injury than this contempt of him; as if he had not goodness to deserve our remembrance, nor amiableness fit for our converse; as if he were not a Lord fit for our subjection, nor had a Holiness that deserved our imitation?

For the use of this. It serves,

1. For Information.

1. *It gives us occasion to admire the wonderful Patience and Mercy of God.* How many Millions of practical Atheists breathe every day in his Air, and live upon his Bounty, who deserve to be Inhabitants in Hell, rather than Possessors of the Earth? An infinite Holiness is offended, an infinite Justice is provoked; yet an infinite Patience forbears the Punishment, and an infinite Goodness relieves our wants: The more we had merited his Justice and forfeited his Favour, the more is his affection enhanced, which makes his hand so liberal to us.

At the first invasion of his rights, he mitigates the terror of the threatening which was set to defend his Law, with the grace of a Promise to relieve and recover his rebellious Creature: \* Who would have looked for any thing but tearing Thunders, sweeping Judgments, to rase up the foundations of the apostate world? But oh, how great are his Bowels to his aspiring Competitors? Have we not experimented his Contrivances for our good, though we have refused him for our happiness? Has he not opened his Arms, when we spurned with our Feet; held out his alluring mercy, when we have brandisht against him a rebellious sword? Has he not intreated us while we have invaded him, as if he were unwilling to lose us, who are ambitious to destroy our selves? Has he yet denied us the care of his Providence, while we have denied him the rights of his Honour, and would appropriate them to our selves? Has the Sun forborn shining upon us, though we have shot our Arrows against him? Have not our Beings been supported by his Goodness, while we have endeavoured to climb up to his Throne; and his mercies continued to charm us, while we have used them as weapons to injure him? Our own necessities might excite us to own him as our happiness, but he adds his invitations to the voice of our wants. Has he not promised a Kingdom to those that would strip him of his Crown, and proclaimed Pardon upon Repentance to those that would take away his Glory? And hath so twisted together his own end which is his Honour, and mans true end, which is his Salvation, that a man cannot truly mind himself and his own Salvation, but he must mind Gods glory; and cannot be intent upon Gods honour, but by the same act he promotes himself and his own happiness; So loth is God to give any just occasion of dissatisfaction to his Creature, as well as dishonour himself. All those wonders of his mercy are enhanced by the hainousness of our Atheism; a multitude of gracious thoughts from him above the multitude of contempts from us. \* What Rebels in actual Arms against their Prince aiming at his Life, ever found that favour from him, to have all their necessities richly afforded them, without which they would starve, and without which they would be unable to manage their attempts, as we have received from God? Had not God had riches of goodness, forbearance and long suffering, and infinite riches too;

\* Gen. 2. 17.

\* Psal. 103. 7.



the despite the world hath done him in refusing him as their *Rule, Happiness, and End* would have emptied him long agoe.\*

\* Rom. 2. 4.

2. *It brings in a Justification of the exercise of his Justice.* If it gives us occasion loudly to praise his Patience; it also stops our mouths from accusing any acts of his Vengeance. What can be too sharp a recompence for the despising and disgracing so great a Being? The highest contempt merits the greatest anger; and when we will not own him for our happiness, 'tis equal we should feel the misery of separation from him. If he that is guilty of Treason deserves to lose his Life; what punishment can be thought great enough for him that is so disingenuous as to prefer himself before a God so infinitely good, and so foolish as to invade the rights of one infinitely powerful? 'Tis no injustice for a Creature, to be for ever left to himself, to see what advantage he can make of that *self* he was so basely employed to set up in the place of his Creator. The Soul of Man deserves an infinite punishment for despising an infinite good: And it is not unequitable, that that *self* which Man makes his Rule and Happiness above God, should become his Torment and Misery by the Righteousness of that God whom he despised.

3. *Hence ariseth a necessity of a new state and frame of Soul, to alter an Atheistical Nature.* We forget God: Think of him with reluctancy: Have no respect to God in our course and acts: This cannot be our original state. God being infinitely good, never let man come out of his hands with this actual unwillingness to acknowledge and serve him: He never intended to dethrone himself for the work of his hands, or that the Creature should have any other end than that of his Creator: As the *Apostle* saith in the Case of the *Galatians* Error, *Gal. 5. 8. This perjury came not of him that called you*; so this frame comes not from him that created you: How much therefore do we need a restoring Principle in us? Instead of ordering our selves according to the Will of God, we are desirous to fulfil the Wills of the *Flesh*\*: There is a necessity of some other principle in us to make us fulfil the Will of God, since we were created for God, not for the *Flesh*.

\* Ephes. 2. 3.

We can no more be voluntarily serviceable to God, while our serpentine nature, and Devillish habits remain in us; than we can suppose the Devil can be willing to glorifie God, while the nature he contracted by his fall abides powerfully in him. Our Nature and Will must be changed, that our actions may regard God as our End, that we may delightfully meditate on him, and draw the motives of our obedience from him. Since this Atheism is seated in Nature, the change must be in our Nature: Since our first aspirings to the rights of God, were the fruits of the Serpents breath which tainted our Nature; there must be a removal of this taint, whereby our Natures may be on the side of God against Satan, as they were before on the side of Satan against God. There must be a supernatural Principle before we can live a supernatural Life, *i.e.* live to God, since we are naturally alienated from the Life of God: The aversion of our Natures from God, is as strong as our inclination to evil; we are disgusted with one, and pressed with the other; we have no will, no heart, to come to God in any service. This Nature must be broken in pieces and new moulded, before we can make God our Rule and our End: While

\* Joh. 3. 19, 20.

\* Gen. 6. 5.

men's deeds are evil, they cannot comply with God\*; much less while their natures are evil: Till this be done, all the service a man performs riseth from some evil imagination of the heart, *whi. his evil, only evil, and that continually\**, from wrong Notions of God, wrong Notions of Duty, or corrupt Motives. All the pretences of Devotion to God, are but the Adoration of some golden Image. Prayers to God for the ends of *self*, are like those of the Devil to our Saviour, when he askt leave to go into the Herd of Swine: The Object was right, Christ; the end was the destruction of the Swine, and the satisfaction of their malice to the Owners: There is a necessity then that depraved ends should be removed, that that which was Gods end in our framing, may be our end in our acting, *viz. his glory*, which cannot be without a change of Nature. We can never honour him supremely whom we do not supremely love: Till this be, we cannot glorifie God as God, though we do things by his Command and Order; no more, than when God employed the Devil in afflicting *Job*\*: His performance cannot be said to be good, because his end was not the same with Gods; he acted out of Malice, what God commanded out of Sovereignty, and for gracious designs: Had God employed an Holy Angel in his

\* Job. 1.

de.



design upon *Job*, the Action had been good in the Affliction; because his Nature was holy, and therefore his ends holy; but bad in the Devil, because his ends were base and unworthy.

4. We may gather from hence, *the difficulty of Conversion, and Mortification to follow thereupon.* What is the reason men receive no more impression from the Voice of God and the Light of his Truth, than a dead man in the Grave doth from the roaring Thunder, or a blind Mole from the Light of the Sun? 'Tis because our Atheism is as great as the deadness of the one, or the blindness of the other. The Principle in the heart is strong to shut the door both of the thoughts and affections against God. If a Friend oblige us, we shall act for him as for our selves: We are won by intreaties, soft words overcome us; but our hearts are as deaf as the hardest Rock, at the call of God: Neither the joys of Heaven proposed by him can allure us, nor the flash terrors of Hell affright us to him; as if we conceived God unable to bestow the one, or execute the other: The true reason is, God and *self* contest for the Deity: The Law of Sin is, God must be at the foot-stool; the Law of God is, Sin must be utterly deposed: Now it is difficult to leave a Law beloved, for a Law long agoe discarded. The mind of man will hunt after any thing; the will of man embrace any thing; upon the proposal of mean Objects the Spirit of man spreads its wings, flies to catch them, becomes one with them: But attempt to bring it under the Power of God; the wings flag, the Creature looks lifeless, as though there were no spring of motion in it: 'Tis as much crucified to God, as the holy *Apostle* was to the world: The *sin* of the heart discovers its strength, the more God discovers the holiness of his Will.\* The love of Sin hath been predominant in our Nature, has quasht a love to God, if not extinguisht it

\* Rom. 7. 9, 10, 11, 12.

Hence also is the difficulty of Mortification. This is a work tending to the honour of God, the abasing of that inordinately aspiring humour in our selves. If the Nature of Man be inclin'd to Sin, as it is, it must needs be bent against any thing that opposes it. 'Tis impossible to strike any true blow at any Lust, till the true Sense of God be re-entertained in the Soyl where it ought to grow. Who can be naturally willing to crucifie what is incorporated with him, *his flesh*? what is dearest to him, *himself*? Is it an easie thing for man, the Competitor with God, to turn his Arms against himself; that *self* should overthrow its own Empire; lay aside all its pretensions to, and designs for a God-head; to hew off its own members, and subdue its own affections? 'Tis the Nature of Man to cover his sin, to hide it in his bosom\*; not to destroy it; and as unwillingly part with his carnal affections, as the Legion of Devils were with the man that had been long possessed: And when he is forced and fired from one, he will endeavour to espouse some other Lust, as those Devils desired to possess Swine, when they were chased from their possession of that man.

\* Job. 13. 33.  
If I cover my  
Transgression, O  
Adam.

5. Here we see the reason of unbelief. That which hath most of God in it, meets with most aversion from us: That which hath least of God, finds better and stronger inclinations in us. What is the reason, that the heart of Man is more unwilling to embrace the Gospel, than acknowledge the equity of the Law? Because there is more of Gods Nature and perfection evident in the Gospel than in the Law: Besides there is more reliance on God, and distance from *self* commanded in the Gospel. The Law puts a man upon his own strength, the Gospel takes him off from his own bottom: The Law acknowledges him to have a power in himself, and to act for his own reward; the Gospel strips him of all his proud and *towering thoughts*\*, brings him to his due place, the foot of God; orders him to deny himself as his own Rule, Righteousness and End; and henceforth not to live to himself.\* This is the true reason why men are more against the Gospel than against the Law; because it doth more deify God, and debase Man. Hence it is easier to reduce men to some Moral Virtue, than to Faith; to make men blush at their outward Vices, but not at the inward impurity of their Natures. Hence it is observed; that those that asserted, that all happiness did arise from something in a mans self, as the Stoicks and Epicureans did; and that a wise man was equal with God; were greater Enemies to the truths of the Gospel than others, *Acts* 17. 18. because it lays the Ax to the root of their principal Opinion. Takes the one from their self-sufficiency, and the other from their self-gratification: It opposeth the brutish principle of the one, which placed happiness in the pleasures of the body, and the more noble principle of the other, which placed happiness

\* 2 Cor. 10. 5;

\* 2 Cor. 5. 13;

in



in the vertue of the mind : The one was for a sensual, the other for a moral *self* : both disowned by the Doctrin of the Gospcl.

6. *It informs us consequently, who can be the Author of Grace and Conversion, and every other good Work.* No practical Atheist ever yet turned to God, but was turned by God ; and not to acknowledge it to God, is a part of this Atheism, since it is a robbing God of the honour of one of his most glorious Works. If this practical Atheism be natural to man ever since the first taint of Nature in Paradise, what can be expected from it but a resisting of the work of God, and setting up all the forces of Nature against the operations of Grace, till a day of power dawn and clear up upon the Soul \* : Not all the Angels in Heaven, or men upon Earth, can be imagined to be able to perswade a Man to fall out with himself. Nothing can turn the Tide of Nature, but a Power above Nature. God took away the sanctifying Spirit from man, as a Penalty for the first sin : Who can regain it but by his Will and Pleasure ? Who can restore it but he that remov'd it ? Since every man hath the same fundamental Atheism in him by Nature, and would be a Rule to himself and his own End ; he is so far from dethroning himself, that all the strength of his corrupted Nature is alarm'd up to stand to their Arms, upon any attempt God makes to regain the Fort. The Will is so strong against God, that 'tis like many wills twisted together, *Eph. 2. 3. Wills of the Flesh*, we translate it the *desires of the flesh* : Like many Threds twisted in a Cable, never to be snapt asunder by a human Arm ; a Power and Will above ours, can only untwist so many Wills in a knot. Man cannot rise to an acknowledgement of God without God : Hell may as well become Heaven, the Devil be changed into an Angel of Light. The Devil cannot but desire happiness ; he knows the misery into which he is fallen ; he cannot be desirous of that punishment he knows is reserved for him. Why doth he not sanctifie God and glorifie his Creator, wherein there is abundantly more pleasure than in his malicious course ? Why doth he not petition to recover his ancient standing ? He will not ; there are *Chains of Darknes* upon his faculties ; he will not be otherwise than he is : His desire to be God of the World sways him against his own interest ; and out of love to his malice, he will not sin at a less rate to make a diminution of his punishment. Man, if God utterly refuseth to work upon him, is no better ; and to maintain his Atheism, would venture a Hell. How is it possible for a man to turn himself to that God, against whom he hath a quarrel in his Nature ; the most rooted and settled habit in him being to set himself in the place of God ? An Atheist by Nature, can no more alter his own temper, and engrave in himself the Divine Nature, than a Rock can carve it self into the Statue of a man, or a Serpent that is an Enemy to Man, could or would raise it self to the Nobility of the humane Nature. That Soul that by Nature would strip God of his Rights, cannot without a Divine Power be made conformable to him, and acknowledg sincerely and cordially the Rights and Glory of God.

7. *We may here see the reason why there can be no justification by the best and strongest works of Nature.* Can that which hath Atheism at the root, justifie either the action or person ? What strength can those works have, which have neither Gods Law for their Rule, nor his Glory for their End ; that are not wrought by any spiritual strength from him, nor tend with any spiritual affection to him ? Can these be a foundation for the most holy God to pronounce a Creature righteous ? They will justifie his Justice in condemning, but cannot sway his Justice to an Absolution. Every natural man in his works, picks and chuses ; he owns the Will of God no further than he can wring it to sute the law of his Members ; and minds not the honour of God, but as it justles not with his own glory and secular ends. Can he be righteous that prefers his own Will and his own Honour, before the Will and Honour of the Creator ? However mens actions may be beneficial to others, what reason hath God to esteem them, wherein there is no respect to him but themselves ; whereby they dethrone him in their thoughts, while they seem to own him in their religious works ? Every day reproves us with something different from the Rule : Thousands of wandrings offer themselves to our eyes. Can Justification be expected from that which in it self is matter of despair ?

8. *See here the cause of all the apostacy in the World.* Practical Atheism was never conquered in such : They are still alienated from the Life of God, and will not live



to God, as he lives to himself and his own honour.\* They loath his Rule, and distaste his Glory; are loth to step out of themselves to promote the ends of another; find not the satisfaction in him as they do in themselves: They will be Judges of what is good for them and righteous in it self, rather than admit of God to judge for them. When men draw back from Truth to Error; 'tis to such opinions which may serve more to foment and cherish their Ambition, Covetousness, or some beloved Lust that disputes with God for precedency, and is designed to be served before him, *Joh. 12. 42. 43. They love the praise of men more than the praise of God.* A preferring man before God, was the reason they would not confess Christ, and God in him.

\* Eph. 4. 17, 18.

9. *This shews us the excellency of the Gospel and Christian Religion.* It sets man in his due place, and gives to God what the Excellency of his Nature requires. It lays man in the dust from whence he was taken, and sets God upon that Throne where he ought to sit. Man by Nature would annihilate God and deifie himself; the Gospel glorifies God and annihilates Man. In our first revolt we would be like him in knowledge; in the means he hath provided for our recovery, he designs to make us like him in Grace: The Gospel shews our selves to be an Object of Humiliation, and God to be a glorious Object for our Imitation. The Light of Nature tells us there is a God; the Gospel gives us a more magnificent report of him: The light of Nature condemns gross Atheism, and that of the Gospel condemns and conquers spiritual Atheism in the hearts of men.

Use 2. Of Exhortation

1. *Let us labour to be sensible of this Atheism in our Nature, and be humbled for it.* How should we lye in the Dust, and go bowing under the humbling thoughts of it all our days? Shall we not be sensible of that whereby we spill the blood of our Souls, and give a stab to the heart of our own Salvation? Shall we be worse than any Creature, not to bewail that which tends to our destruction? He that doth not lament it, cannot challenge the Character of a Christian, hath nothing of the divine Life and Love planted in his Soul. Not a man but shall one day be sensible, when the Eternal God shall call him out to Examination, and charge his Conscience to discover every Crime, which will then own the Authority whereby it acted; when the heart shall be torn open, and the secrets of it brought to publick view; and the World and Man himself shall see what a viperous Brood of corrupt Principles and Ends nested in his Heart. Let us therefore be truly sensible of it, till the consideration draw tears from our Eyes, and sorrow from our Souls: Let us urge the thoughts of it upon our hearts, till the Core of that Pride be eaten out, and our Stubborness changed into Humility: Till our Heads become Waters, and our Eyes Fountains of tears, and be a spring of Prayer to God to change the heart, and mortifie the Atheism in it; and consider what a sad thing it is to be a practical Atheist: And who is not so by Nature?

1. *Let us be sensible of it in our selves.* Have any of our hearts been a Soyl where in the Fear and Reverence of God hath naturally grown? Have we a desire to know him, or a will to embrace him? Do we delight in his Will, and love the remembrance of his Name? Are our respects to him as God, equal to the speculative knowledge we have of his Nature? Is the heart wherein he hath stamp't his Image, reserved for his Residence? Is not the world more affected than the Creator of the world; as though that could contribute to us a greater happiness than the Author of it? Have not Creatures as much of our love, fear, trust; nay, more than God that framed both them and us? Have we not too often relyed upon our own strength, and made a Calf of our own wisdom, and said of God as the Israelites of *Moses, As for this Moses we not not what is become of him,* *Exod. 32. 1.* and given oftener the glory of our good success to our Dragg and our Net, to our Craft and our Industry, than to the wisdom and blessing of God? Are we then free from this sort of Atheism\*? 'Tis as impossible to have two Gods at one time in one heart, as to have two Kings at one time in full power in one Kingdom. Have there not been frequent neglects of God? Have we not been deaf whilst he hath knocked at our doors; slept when he hath sounded in our Ears, as if there had been no such Being as a God in the world? How many strugglings have been against our approaches to him? Hath not folly often been committed with vain imaginations starting up in the time of Religious Service, which

\* Lawson *body of Divinity* pa. 153. 154.



which we would scarce vouchsafe a look to at another time, and in another business, but would have thrust them away with indignation? Had they stept in to interrupt our worldly Affairs, they would have been troublesome Intruders, but while we are with God they are acceptable Guests. How unwilling have our hearts been to fortifie themselves with strong and influencing considerations of God, before we address to him? Is it not too often that our lifelessness in Prayer proceeds from this Atheism; a neglect of seeing what Arguments and Pleas may be drawn from the divine perfections, to second our suit in hand, and quicken our hearts in the service? Whence are those indispositions to any spiritual duty, but because we have not due thoughts of the Majesty, Holiness, Goodness and Excellency of God? Is there any duty which leads to a more particular inquiry after him, or a more clear vision of him; but our hearts have been ready to rise up and call it cursed rather than blessed? Are not our minds bemisted with an ignorance of him, our wills drawn by aversion from him, our affections rising in distast of him? More willing to know any thing than his Nature, and more industrious to do any thing than his Will? Do we not all fall under some one or other of these considerations? Is it not fit then that we should have a sense of them? 'Tis to be bewail'd by us, that so little of God is in our hearts, when so many evidences of the love of God are in the Creatures; that God should be so little our end, who hath been so much our Benefactor; that he should be so little in our thoughts, who sparkles in every thing which presents it self to our eyes.

2. *Let us be sensible of it in others.* We ought to have a just execration of the too open iniquity in the midst of us; and imitate holy *David*, whose tears plentifully gush'd out, *because men kept not Gods Law.* \* And is it not a time to exercise this pious lamentation? Hath the wicked Atheism of any age been greater, or can you find worse in Hell, than we may hear of and behold on Earth? How is the excellent Majesty of God, adored by the Angels in Heaven; despised and reproached by men on Earth; as if his name were publish'd to be matter of their sport? What a gasping thing is a natural sense of God among men in the World? Is not the Law of God, accompanied with such dreadful threatnings and curses, made light of; as if men would place their honour in being above or beyond any sense of that glorious Majesty? How many wallow in Pleasures, as if they had been made men, only to turn brutes, and their Souls given them only for Salt to keep their bodies from putrifying? 'Tis as well a part of Atheism not to be sensible of the abuses of Gods name and Laws by others, as to violate them our selves: What is the language of a stupid senselessness of them, but that there is no God in the world, whose glory is worth a vindication and deserves our regards?

That we may be sensible of the unworthiness of neglecting God as our Rule and end; consider,

1. *The Unreasonableness of it as it concerns God.*

1. First, *Tis a high contempt of God.* 'Tis an inverting the order of things; a making God the highest, to become the lowest, and self the lowest, to become the highest: To be guided by every base Companion, some idle vanity, some carnal interest, is to acknowledge an excellency abounding in them which is wanting in God: An equity in their orders and none in Gods precepts: A goodness in their promises and a falsity in Gods: As if infinite excellency were a meer vanity, and to act for God, were the debasement of our reason; to act for self or some pitiful Creature, or for did lust, were the glory and advancement of it. To prefer any one sin before the honour of God, is as if that sin had been our Creator and Benefactor, as if it were the original cause of our being and support. Do not men pay as great a homage to that as they do to God? Do not their minds eagerly pursue it? Are not the revolvings of it in their fancies as delightful to them, as the remembrance of God to a holy Soul? Do any obey the Commands of God with more readiness, than they do the orders of their base affections? Did *Peter* leap more readily into the Sea to meet his Master, than many into the jaws of Hell to meet their *Dalilah's*? How cheerfully did the *Israelites* part with their Ornaments for the sake of an Idol, who would not have spared a moiety for the honour of their Deliverer? \* If to make God our end is the principal duty in nature, then to make our selves or any thing else our end, is the greatest vice in the rank of evils.

\* Exod. 32. 3.  
All the people  
brake off the  
golden ear-rings.

Secondly,



Secondly, *Tis a contempt of God as the most amiable object.* God is infinitely excellent and desirable, Zach. 9. 17. *How great is his goodness and how great is his beauty?* There is nothing in him but what may ravish our affections; none that knows him but finds attractives to keep them with him: He hath nothing in him which can be a proper object of contempt, no defects or shadow of evil; there is infinite excellency to charm us and infinite goodness to allure us; the Author of our beings, the Benefactor of our lives: Why then should Man, which is his Image, be so base as to slight the beautiful original which stamp it on him? He is the most lovely object, therefore to be studied, therefore to be honoured, therefore to be followed: In regard of his perfection he hath the highest right to our thoughts. All other beings were eminently contained in his essence, and were produced by his infinite power: The Creature hath nothing but what it hath from God: And is it not unworthy to prefer the Copy before the original, to fall in love with a Picture instead of the beauty it represents? The Creature which we advance to be our rule and end, can no more report to us the true amiableness of God, than a few Colours mixed and futed together upon a piece of cloth, can the moral and intellectual loveliness of the Soul of Man. To condemn God one moment is more base, than if all Creatures were condemned, by us for ever; because the excellency of Creatures is to God, like that of a drop to the Sea, or a spark to the glory of unconceivable millions of Suns. As much as the excellency of God is above our conceptions, so much doth the debasing of him admit of unexpressible aggravations.

2. *Consider the ingratitude in it.* That we should resist that God with our hearts, who made us the work of his hands, and count him as nothing, from whom we derive all the good that we are or have: There is no contempt of Man but steps in here to aggravate our slighting of God; Because there is no relation one man can stand in to another, wherein God doth not more highly appear to man. If we abhor the unworthy carriage of a Child to a tender Father, a Servant to an indulgent Master, a Man to his obliging Friend; why do men daily act that towards God, which they cannot speak of without abhorrency, if acted by another against man? Is God a being less to be regarded than man, and more worthy of contempt than a Creature? [\* It would be strange if a benefactor should live in the same Town, in the same house with us and we never exchange a word with him; yet this is our case, who have the works of God in our eyes, the goodness of God in our being, the mercy of God in our daily food] yet think so little of him, converse so little with him, serve every thing before him, and prefer every thing above him? Whence have we our mercies but from his hand. Who, besides him, maintains our breath this moment? Would he call for our Spirits this moment, they must depart from us to attend his Command. There is not a moment wherein our unworthy carriage is not aggravated, because there is not a moment wherein he is not our guardian, and gives us not taste of a fresh bounty. And it is no light aggravation of our Crime, that we injure him, without whose bounty in giving us our being, we had not been capable of casting contempt upon him: That he that hath the greatest stamp of his Image, Man, should deserve the Character of the worst of his Rebels: That he who hath only reason by the gift of God to Judge of the equity of the Laws of God, should swell against them as greivous, and the Government of the Lawgiver as burdensome. Can it lessen the crime to use the principle wherein we excel the beasts to the disadvantage of God, who endowed us with that principle above the beasts?

\* Reynolds.

1. *Tis a debasing of God beyond what the Devil doth at present.* He is more excusable in his present state of acting, than man is in his present refusing God for his Rule and End. He strives against a God that exerciseth upon him a vindictive Justice: We debase a God that loads us with his daily mercies. The despairing Devils are excluded from any mercy or divine patience: But we are not only under the long suffering of his patience, but the large expressions of his bounty. He would not be governed by him when he was only his bountiful Creator. We refuse to be guided by him after he hath given us the blessing of Creation from his own hand, and the more obliging blessings of Redemption by the hand and blood of his Son.

It cannot be imagined that the Devils and the damned should ever make God their end, since he hath assured them he will not be their happiness; and shut up all his perfections from their experimental notice, but those of his power to preserve



them and his Justice, to punish them: They have no grant from God of ever having a heart to comply with his Will, or ever having the honour to be actively employed for his glory. They have some plea for their present contempt of God: not in regard of his nature, for he is infinitely amiable, excellent and lovely; but in regard of his administration towards them: But what plea can Man have for his Practical Atheism, who lives by his power, is sustained by his bounty, and comforted by his Spirit? What an ungrateful thing is it to put off the nature of Man for that of Devils; and dishonour God under mercy, as the Devils do under his wrathful anger?

2. *Tis an ungratefull contempt of God, who cannot be injurious to us.* He cannot do us wrong, because he cannot be unjust, Gen. 18. 25. *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* His nature doth as much abhor unrighteousness, as love a Communicative goodness: He never Commanded any thing, but what was highly conducive to the happiness of man. Infinite goodness can no more injure man, than it can dishonour it self: It lays out it self in additions of kindness, and whiles we debase him, he continues to benefit us: And is it not an unparall'd ingratitude to turn our backs upon an object so lovely, an object so loving in the midst of varieties of allurements from him? God did Create intellectual Creatures, Angels and Men, that he might Communicate more of himself and his own goodness and holiness to man, than Creatures of a lower rank were capable of. What do we do by rejecting him as our Rule and End, but cross, as much as in us lies, Gods end in our Creation, and shut our Souls against the Communications of those perfections he was so willing to bestow? We use him as if he intended us the greatest wrong, when tis impossible for him to do any to any of his Creatures.

3. *Consider the misery which will attend such a temper if it continue predominant.* Those that thrust God away as their happiness and end, can expect no other, but to be thrust away by him as to any relief and Compassion. A distance from God here can look for nothing, but a remoteness from God hereafter. When the Devil, a Creature of vast Endowments, would advance himself above God, and instruct man to commit the same sin he is *Cursed above all Creatures.* \* When we will not acknowledge him a God of all glory, we shall be separated from him as a God of all comfort: *All they that are afar off shall perish,* Psa. 73. 27. This is the spring of all woe. What the Prodigal suffered, was because he would leave his Father and live of himself. Whosoever is ambitious to be his own Heaven; will at last find his Soul to become its own Hell. As it loved all things for it self, so it shall be grieved with all things for it self. As it would be its own God against the right of God, it shall then be its own tormenter by the Justice of God.

2. *Duty, Watch against this Atheism and be daily employed in the mortification of it.* In every action we should make the inquiry, what is the rule I observe? Is it Gods Will or my own? Whether do my intentions tend, to set up God or self? As much as we destroy this, we abate the power of sin: These two things are the head of the Serpent in us, which we must be bruising by the power of the Cross. Sin is nothing else but a turning from God and centring in self, and most in the inferior part of self: If we bend our force against those two self Will, and self-Ends, we shall intercept Atheism at the Spring head, take away that which doth constitute and animate all sin: The sparks must vanish, if the fire be quencht which affords them fuel. They are but two short things to ask in every undertaking: Is God my *Rule* in regard of his Will? Is God my *End* in regard of his glory? All sin lies in the neglect of these, all grace lies in the practice of them.

Without some degree of the mortification of these, we cannot make profitable and comfortable approaches to God. When we come with *Idols* in our hearts, we shall be answered according to the *multitude* and the baseness of them too. \* What expectation of a good look from him can we have, when we come before him with undeifying thoughts of him; a Petition in our mouths and a Sword in our hearts to stab his honour?

To this purpose,

1. *Be often in the views of the excellencies of God.* When we have no intercourse with God by delightful Meditations, we begin to be estranged from him, and prepare our selves to live without God in the world. Strangeness is the Mother and Nurse

\* Gen. 3. 14.

\* Ezek. 14. 4.



Nurse of disaffection: We slight men sometimes because we know them not. The very beasts delight in the Company of men, when being tamed and familiar, they become acquainted with their disposition. A dayly converse with God would discover so much of loveliness in his nature, so much of sweetness in his ways, that our injurious thoughts of God would wear off, and we should count it our honour to condemn our selves and magnifie him. By this means a *slavish fear* which is both a dishonour to God and a *torment* to the Soul, \* and the root of Atheism, will be cast out, and an ingenious fear of him wrought in the heart. Exercised thoughts on him would issue out in affections to him, which would engage our hearts to make him both our rule and our end. This course would stifle any temptations to gross Atheism, wherewith good Souls are sometimes haunted, by confirming us more in the belief of a God; and discourage any attempts, to a deliberate practical Atheism: We are not like to espouse any principle which is confuted by the delightful converse we dayly have with him. The more we thus enter into the presence Chamber of God, the more we cling about him with our affections; the more vigorous and lively will the true Notion of God grow up in us, and be able to prevent any thing which may dishonour him and debase our Souls. \* 1 Joh. 4. 18.

Let us therefore consider him as the only happiness: Set up the true God in our understandings; possess our hearts with a deep sense of his desirable excellency above all other things. This is the main thing we are to do in order to our great business: All the directions in the world with the neglect of this, will be insignificant Ciphers. The neglect of this is Common, and is the basis of all the mischiefs which happen to the Souls of men.

2. To this purpose, *Prize and study the Scripture*. We can have no delight in Meditation on him, unless we know him; and we cannot know him but by the means of his own Revelation: When the Revelation is despised, the Revealer will be of little esteem. Men do not throw off God from being their rule, till they throw off Scripture from being their guide; and God must needs be cast off from being an end, when the Scripture is rejected from being a Rule: Those that do not care to know his Will, that love to be ignorant of his nature, can never be affected to his honour. Let therefore the subtilties of reason vail to the Doctrine of faith, and the humor of the Will to the Command of the word.

3. *Take heed of sensual pleasures*, And be very watchful and cautious in the use of those comforts God allows us. Job was afraid when his Sons feasted, that they should Curse God in their hearts. \* It was not without cause that the Apostle Peter joyned sobriety with watchfulness and Prayer, 1 Pet. 4. 7. *The end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober and watch unto Prayer*. A moderate use of worldly comforts. Prayer is the great acknowledgment of God, and too much sensuality is a hindrance of this, and a step to Atheism. Belsazzars lifting himself up against the Lord, and not glorifying of God, is charged upon his sensuality, Dan. 5. 23. Nothing is more apt to quench the Notions of God, and root out the Conscience of him, than an addictedness to sensual pleasures. Therefore take heed of that snare. \* Job. 1. 4.

4. *Take heed of sins against knowledge*. The more sins against knowledge are committed, the more careless we are, and the more careless we shall be of God and his honour. We shall more fear his judicial power, and the more we fear that, the more we shall disaffect that God in whose hand vengeance is, and to whom it doth belong. Atheism in conversation proceeds to Atheism in affection, and that will endeavour to sink into Atheism in opinion and Judgment.

*The Sum of the Whole.*

And now consider in the whole what has been spoken.

1. *Man would set himself up as his own Rule*. He disowns the Rule of God, is unwilling to have any acquaintance with the Rule God sets him, negligent in using the means for the knowledge of his Will; and Endeavours to shake it off when any notices of it breaks in upon him. VVhen he cannot expel it, he hath no pleasure in the Consideration of it, and the heart swells against it. VVhen the Notions of the Will of God are entertained, it is on some other Consideration, or with wavering and unsettled affections. Many times men designe to improve some lust by his truth.



This unwillingness respects Truth as tis most Spiritual and holy ; as it most relates and leads to God ; as it is most contrary to *self*. He is guilty of Contempt of the Will of God, which is seen in every presumptuous breach of his Law. In the natural aversions to the declaration of his Will and mind which way soever he turns. In flighting that part of his Will which is most for his honour. In the awkwardness of the heart, when it is to pay God a service. A constraint in the first engagement, slowness in the service, in regard of the matter ; in regard of the frame, without a natural vigour. Many distractions, much weariness, in deserting the Rule of God, when our expectations are not answered upon our service, in breaking promises with God.

Man naturally owns any other Rule, rather than that of Gods prescribing. The Rule of *Satan* ; the Will of Man ; In complying more with the dictates of Men than the Will of God ; In observing that which is materially so, not because it is his Will, but the injunctions of Men. In obeying the Will of Man when it is contrary to the Will of God. This Man doth in order to the setting up himself. This is natural to Man as he is corrupted. Men are dissatisfied with their own Consciences when they contradict the desires of *self*. Most actions in the world are done, more because they are agreeable to *self*, than as they are honourable to God : As they are agreeable to natural and moral *self* or sinful *self*. 'Tis evident in neglects of taking Gods directions upon emergent occasions. In counting the actions of others to be good or bad, as they suite with or spurn against our fancies and humors. Man would make himself the Rule of God, and give laws to his Creator : In striving against his Law : Disapproving of his Methods of Government in the world ; in impatience in our particular concerns ; envying the gifts and prosperity of others : Corrupt matter or ends of Prayer or praise : Bold interpretations of the Judgments of God in the world. Mixing Rules in the Worship of God with those which have been ordained by him. Suting interpretations of Scripture with our own minds and humors. Faling off from God after some fair compliances, when his Will grates upon us and crosses ours.

2. *Man would be his own end.* This is natural and universal. This is seen in frequent *self* applauses and inward overweening reflections. In ascribing the glory of what we do or have to our selves. In desire of self pleasing Doctrines. In being highly concerned in injuries done to our selves, and little or not at all concerned for injuries done to God. In trusting in our selves. In workings for Carnal *self* against the light of our own Consciences, this is a usurping Gods prerogative, vilifying God, destroying God. Man would make any thing his end or happiness rather than God. This appears in the fewer thoughts we have of him than of any thing else. In the greedy pursuit of the world. In the strong addictedness to sensual pleasures. In paying a service upon any success in the world to instruments more than to God. This is a debasing God in setting up a Creature ; But more in setting up a base lust : Tis a denying of God. Man would make himself the end of all Creatures. In pride ; using the Creatures contrary to the end God hath appointed. This is to dishonour God ; And it is Diabolical. Man would make himself the end of God. In loving God, because of some *self* pleasing benefits distributed by him. In abstinence from some sins, because they are against the interest of some other beloved Corruption. In performing duties meerly for a selfish interest which is evident in unwealdiness in Religious duties where *self* is not concern'd. In calling upon God only in a time of necessity. In begging his assistance to our own projects, after we have by our own Craft laid the Plot. In impatience upon a refusal of our desires. In selfish aims we have in our duties. This is a vilifying God, a de-throning him. In unworthy imaginations of God, universal in Man by nature. Hence spring Idolatry, Superstition, Presumption, the common disease of the world. This is a vilifying God ; worse than Idolatry, worse than absolute Atheism. Natural desires to be distant from him. No desires for the remembrance of him. No desires of converse with him. No desires of a through return to him. No desire of any close imitation of him.



A  
DISCOURSE  
UPON  
GODS  
BEING A  
SPIRIT.

JOHN 4. 24.

*God is a Spirit, and they that Worship him, must worship him in Spirit, and in truth.*

**T**HE words are part of the Dialogue between our Saviour, and the Samaritan Woman. Christ intending to return from Judea to Galilee, passed through the Country of Samaria, a place inhabited not by Jews, but a mixt Company of several Nations, and some remainders of the posterity of Israel, who escaped the Captivity and were returned from Assyria; and being weary with his Journey, arrived about the sixth hour or noon (according to the Jews reckoning the time of the day) at a Well that Jacob had digged, which was of great account among the Inhabitants for the Antiquity of it, as well as the usefulness of it, in supplying their necessities: He being thirsty, and having none to furnish him wherewith to draw water, at last comes a Woman from the City, whom he desires to give him *some water* to drink. The Woman perceiving him by his Language or Habit to be a Jew, wonders at the question, since the hatred the Jews bore the Samaritans was so great, that they would not vouchsafe to have any Commerce with them, not only in Religious, but Civil affairs, and Common Offices belonging to Man-kind. Hence our Saviour takes occasion to publish to her the Doctrine of the Gospel; and excuseth her rude Answer by her Ignorance of him: And tells her, that if she had askt him a greater matter, even that which concern'd her Eternal Salvation, he would readily have granted it, notwithstanding the rooted hatred between the Jews and Samaritans; and bestowed a water of a greater vertue, the *water of life*. \* The Woman is no less astonished at his reply, than she was at his first demand. It was strange to hear a Man speak of giving living water, to one of whom he had beg'd the water of that Spring, and had no Vessel to draw any to quench his own thirst. She therefore demands whence he could have this water that he speaks of, \* since she conceived him not greater than Jacob, who had digged that Well and drunk of it. Our Saviour defi-

\* Amirauc.  
Paraph. sur  
Jean.

\* ver. 10. Or  
living water.

\* ver. 11.

rous



rous to mak a progress in that work, he had begun, extols the Water he spake of, above this of the Well, from its particular vertue, fully to refresh those that drank of it, and be as a Cooling and Comforting Fountain *within* them, of more efficacy than that *without*. \* The *Woman* conceiving a good opinion of our *Saviour*, desires to partake of this Water, to save her pains in coming dayly to the Well, not apprehending the Spirituality of *Christ's* discourse to her: \* Christ finding her to take some pleasure in his Discourse, partly to bring her to a sense of *her sin*, before he did Communicate the excellency of *his grace*, bids her return back to the City and bring her Husband with her to him: \* She freely acknowledges that she had no Husband, whether having some check of Conscience at present for the unclean life she led, or loth to lose so much time in the gaining this water so much desired by her: \* Our *Saviour* takes an occasion from this to lay open her sin before her, and to make her sensible of her own wicked life and the prophetick excellency of himself; and tells her, she had had five Husbands to whom she had been false, and by whom she was divorced, and the person she now dwelt with was not her lawful Husband, and in living with him she violated the Rights of Marriage, and encreased guilt upon her Conscience. \* The *Woman* being affected with this discourse, and knowing him to be stranger, that could not be certified of those things but in an extraordinary way, begins to have a high esteem of him as a *Prophet*. \* And upon this opinion she esteems him able to decide a question which had been Canvass'd between them and the *Jews* about the place of Worship. \* Their *Fathers* Worshipping in that *Mountain*, and the *Jews* affirming *Jerusalem* to be a place of worship: She pleads the Antiquity of the worship in this place: *Abraham* having built an Altar there, *Gen. 12. 7.* and *Jacob* upon his return from *Syria*. And surely had the place been capable of an exception, such persons as they and so well acquainted with the Will of God, would not have pitched upon that place to Celebrate their worship.

Antiquity hath too too often bewitched the minds of Men, and drawn them from the revealed Will of God. Men are more willing to imitate the outward actions of their famous Ancestors, than conform themselves to the revealed Will of their Creator. The *Samaritans* would imitate the *Patriarchs* in the place of worship, but not in the faith of the worshippers.

Christ answers her, that this question would quickly be resolved by a new state of the Church which was neer at hand, and neither *Jerusalem* which had now the precedency, nor that *Mountain* should be of any more value in that concern than any other place in the world: \* But yet to make her sensible of her sin, and that of her Country-men, tells her, that their Worship in that *Mountain* was not according to the Will of God, he having long after the Altars built in this place fixed *Jerusalem* as the place of Sacrifices; besides, they had not the knowledge of that God which ought to be worshipped by them, but the *Jews* had the true object of Worship and the true manner of worship according to the declaration God had made of himself to them. \* But all that service shall vanish, the vail of the Temple shall be rent in twain, and that Carnal worship give place to one more Spiritual; shadows shall fly before substance, and truth advance it self above figures, and the worship of God shall be with the strength of the Spirit; such a worship, and such worshippers doth the Father seek: \* For God is a Spirit, and those that Worship him must Worship him in Spirit and in truth. The design of our *Saviour* is to declare, that God is not taken with external worship invented by men, no nor Commanded by himself; and upon that this reason, because he is a *Spiritual essence*, infinitely above gross and Corporeal matter, and is not taken with that pomp which is a pleasure to our Earthly imaginations.

*Πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός.* Some translate it just as the words lie. *Spirit is God*: \* But it is not unusual both in the old and new Testament languages, to put the predicate before the subject, as *Psal. 5. 9.* *Their throat is an open Sepulchre*, in the Hebrew a *Sepulchre open their throat*. So *Psa. 111. 3.* *His work is honourable and glorious*. Heb. *Honour and glory his work*: And there wants not one example in the same Evangelist, *Joh. 1. 1.* *And the word was God*. Greek and *God was the word*: In all, the predicate or what is ascribed, is put before the subject to which it is ascribed.

One tells us, and he an head of a party, that hath made a disturbance in the Church of



of God, \* that this place is not aptly brought to prove God to be a Spirit: And the reason of Christ runs not thus, God is of a Spiritual Essence, and therefore must be worshipped with a Spiritual worship; for the Essence of God is not the Foundation of his worship, but his Will; for then we were not to worship him with a Corporal worship, because he is not a body; but with an invisible and Eternal worship because he is invisible and eternal.

But the nature of God is the foundation of worship, the Will of God is the Rule of worship; the matter and manner is to be performed according to the Will of God. But is the nature of the object of worship to be excluded? No, as the object is, so ought our Devotion to be, Spiritual as he is Spiritual. God in his Commands for worship respected the discovery of his own nature; in the Law he respected the discovery of his mercy and justice, and therefore Commanded a worship by Sacrifices; a Spiritual worship without those institutions would not have declared those Attributes, which was Gods end to display to the world in Christ: And tho the nature of God is to be respected in worship, yet the obligations of the Creature are to be considered. God is a Spirit therefore must have a Spiritual worship: The Creature hath a body as well as a Soul, and both from God; and therefore ought to worship God with the one as well as the other, since one as well as the other is freely bestowed upon him.

The Spirituality of God was the foundation of the change from the Judaical carnal worship to a more Spiritual and Evangelical.

[God is a Spirit.]

That is, he hath nothing Corporeal, no mixture of matter, not a visible substance, a bodily form. \* He is a Spirit, not a bare Spiritual substance: But an understanding willing Spirit, holy, wise, good and just. Before Christ spake of the Father, \* the first person in the Trinity: Now he speaks of God Essentially: The word *Father* is personal, the word *God* essential. So that our Saviour would render a reason, not from any one person in the blessed Trinity, but from the Divine nature, why we should worship in Spirit, and therefore makes use of the word God, the being a Spirit being Common to the other persons with the Father.

This is the reason of the proposition, *verse 23. Of a Spiritual Worship.* Every nature delights in that which is like it, and distasts that which is most different from it. If God were Corporeal, he might be pleased with the victims of beasts, and the beautiful Magnificence of Temples, and the noyse of Musick: But being a Spirit, he cannot be gratified with carnal things: He demands something better and greater than all those, that Soul which he made, that Soul which he hath endowed, a Spirit of a frame suitable to his nature. He indeed appointed Sacrifices and a Temple, as shadows of those things which were to be most acceptable to him in the Messiah, but they were imposed only till the time of Reformation. \*

[Must worship him.]

Not they may, or it would be more agreeable to God to have such a manner of worship: But they *must*. Tis not exclusive of bodily worship; for this were to exclude all publick worship in societies, which cannot be performed without reverential postures of the body. \* The Gestures of the body are helps to worship and declarations of Spiritual acts. We can scarcely worship God with our Spirits without some tincture upon the outward-man. But he excludes all acts meerly Corporeal, all resting upon an external service and devotion, which was the Crime of the *Pharisees*, and the general persuasion of the *Jews* as well as Heathens, who used the outward Ceremonies, not as signs of better things, but as if they did of themselves please God, and render the worshippers accepted with him, without any suitable frame of the inward man: \* It is as if he had said, now you must separate yourselves from all carnal modes to which the service of God is now tyed, and render a worship chiefly consisting in the affectionate motions of the heart, and accommodated more exactly to the condition of the object, who is a Spirit.

[In Spirit and Truth]

\* The Evangelical Service now required, has the advantage of the former; that was a Shadow and Figure, this the Body and Truth. \* Spirit, say some, is here opposed to the legal Ceremonies; Truth, to hypocritical services; or \* rather truth is opposed to shadows, and an opinion of worth in the outward action; tis principally oppo-

\* Epist. I.  
Stat. lib. 4.  
cap. 3.

\* Melancton.

\* ver. 23.

\* Heb. 9. 12.

\* Tertiti.

\* Amiral.  
in loc.

\* Amiral.  
in loc.  
\* Muscul.  
\* Chemnitz.



opposed to external Rites, because our Saviour saith, *v. 22. The hour comes, and now is, &c.* Had it been opposed to Hypocrisy, Christ had said no new thing: For God always required Truth in the inward parts, and all true Worshippers had served him with a sincere Conscience and single Heart. The old Patriarchs did worship God in Spirit and Truth, as taken for sincerity: Such a Worship was always, and is perpetually due to God; because he always was, and eternally will be a Spirit. \* And it is said, *the Father seeks such to worship him*; not shall seek: He always sought it; it always was performed to him by one or other in the world: And the *Prophets* had always rebuked them, for resting upon their outward Solemnities, *Isa. 52. 7. and Micah. 6. 8.* But a Worship without legal Rites was proper to an Evangelical State and the times of the Gospel; God having then exhibited Christ, and brought into the world the substance of those shadows, and the end of those institutions: There was no more need to continue them, when the true reason of them was ceased. All Laws do naturally expire, when the true reason upon which they were first framed, is changed.

\* Mafcal.

2 Cor. 3. 8.  
\* Rom. 7. 6.

Or by Spirit may be meant, such a Worship as is kindled in the heart by the breath of the holy Ghost. Since we are dead in sin, a spiritual light and flame in the heart suitable to the nature of the object of our worship, cannot be raised in us without the operation of a supernatural Grace: And though the Fathers could not worship God without the Spirit; yet in the Gospel-times, there being a fuller effusion of the Spirit, the Evangelical State is called *the administration of the Spirit*, and *the renewing of the Spirit*, in opposition to the legal Oeconomy, entitled *the oldness of the Letter*\*. The Evangelical State is more suited to the Nature of God than any other: Such a Worship God must have, whereby he is acknowledged to be the true Sanctifier and Quickner of the Soul. The nearer God doth approach to us, and the more full his manifestations are; the more spiritual is the Worship we return to God. The Gospel pares off the rugged parts of the Law, and Heaven shall remove what is material in the Gospel, and change the Ordinances of Worship into that of a Spiritual Praise.

In the words there is,

1. *A Proposition* [ *God is a Spirit.* ] The Foundation of all Religion.
2. *An Inference* [ *they that worship him, &c.* ]

As God, a Worship belongs to him; as a Spirit, a spiritual Worship is due to him, in the inference we have.

1. *The manner of Worship* [ *in Spirit and Truth* ]
2. *The necessity of such a Worship* [ *must* ]

The Proposition declares the Nature of God; the Inference, the Duty of Man.

The Observations lie plain.

- Ob. 1. *God is a pure spiritual Being.* [ *He is a Spirit* ]
2. *The Worship due from the Creature to God, must be agreeable to the Nature of God, and purely spiritual.*
3. *The Evangelical State is suited to the Nature of God.*

For the first,

D. *God is a pure spiritual Being.*

\* Epist. infli.  
tut. l. 4. c. 3.

\*Tis the Observation of one,\* that the plain assertion of Gods being a Spirit, is found but once in the whole Bible, and that is in this place; which may well be wondered at; because God is so often described with hands, feet, eyes and ears in the form and figure of a Man. The spiritual Nature of God, is deducible from many places; but not any where, as I remember, asserted *totidem verbis*, but in this Text: Some alledge that place, *2 Cor. 3. 17. the Lord is that Spirit*, for the proof of it; but that seems to have a different sense: In the Text the Nature of God is described; in that place, the operations of God in the Gospel. [\*Tis not the Ministry of Moses, or that old Covenant, which communicates to you that Spirit it speaks of; but it is the Lord Jesus, and the Doctrine of the Gospel delivered by him, whereby this Spirit and Liberty is dispensed to you: He opposes here the Liberty of the Gospel to the Servitude of the Law] \*Tis from Christ, that a Divine Vertue diffuseth it self by the Gospel; 'tis by him, not by the Law, that we partake of that Spirit.

\* Anyvald in  
loc.\* Suarez. de  
Deo vol. 1. p.  
5. Col. 2.

\* The Spirituality of God, is as evident as his Being. If we grant that God is, we



we must necessarily grant that he cannot be corporeal; because a Body is of an imperfect Nature. It will appear incredible to any that acknowledge God the first Being and Creator of all things, that he should be a massy heavy Body, and have Eyes and Ears, Feet and hands as we have.

For the explication of it.

1. *Spirit is taken various ways in Scripture.* It signifies sometimes an aerial substance, as *Psal. 11. 6. A horrible Tempest*: Heb. A Spirit of Tempest: Sometimes the breath, which is a thin substance, *Gen. 6. 17. All Flesh wherein is the breath of Life*: Heb. Spirit of Life. A thin substance, though it be material and corporeal, is called Spirit: And in the bodies of living Creatures, that which is the principle of their actions is called Spirits; the animal and vital Spirits: And the finer parts extracted from Plants and Minerals, we call Spirits: Those volatile parts separated from that gross matter wherein they were immerst, because they come nearest to the nature of an incorporeal substance: And from this notion of the word, 'tis translated to signifie those substances that are purely immaterial, as Angels, and the Souls of Men. *Angels* are called *Spirits*, *Psal. 104. 4. who makes his Angels Spirits*\*; And not only good Angels are so called, but *evil Angels*, *Mark 1. 27.* Souls of men are called Spirits, *Ecd. 12.* And the Soul of Christ is called so, *John 19. 30.* whence God is called *the God of the Spirits of all Flesh*, *Numb. 22. 16.* and Spirit is opposed to Flesh, *IJa. 31. 3. the Egyptians are Flesh and not Spirit.* And our Saviour gives us the notion of a Spirit to be *something above the nature of a Body*, *Luke 24. 39. not having flesh and bones*, extended parts, loads of gross matter. 'Tis also taken for those things which are active and efficacious; because activity, is of the nature of a Spirit. *Caleb* had another Spirit, *Num. 14. 24.* an active affection. The vehement motions of sin are called Spirit, *Hos. 4. 12. the Spirit of Whoredoms*, in that sense that *Pro. 29. 11. a Fool utters all his mind*, all his Spirit, he knows not how to restrain the vehement motions of his mind. So that the notion of a Spirit is, that it is a fine immaterial substance, an active being, that acts it self and other things. A meer Body cannot act it self; as the Body of Man cannot move without the Soul, no more than a Ship can move it self without Wind and Waves.

\* Heb. 1. 14.

So God is called a Spirit, as being not a Body, not having the greatness, figure, thickness or length of a Body, wholly separate from any thing of flesh and matter. We find a Principle within us nobler than that of our Bodies; and therefore we conceive the Nature of God, according to that which is more worthy in us, and not according to that which is the vilest part of our Natures. God is a most spiritual Spirit, more spiritual than all Angels, all Souls: \* As he exceeds all in the nature of Being, so he exceeds all in the nature of Spirit: He hath nothing gross, heavy, material in his Essence.

\* Gerhard. *in locis*

2. *When we say God is a Spirit, 'tis to be understood by way of Negation.* There are two ways of knowing or describing God: By way of affirmation, affirming that of him in a way of eminency, which is excellent in the Creature; as when we say God is wise, good: The other, by way of negation, when we remove from God in our conceptions, what is tainted with imperfection in the Creature. \* The first ascribes to him whatsoever is excellent; the other separates from him whatsoever is imperfect. The first is like a Limning, which adds one Colour to another to make a comely Picture; the other is like a Carving, which pares and cuts away whatsoever is superfluous, to make a compleat Statue. This way of negation is more easie; we better understand *what God is not*, than *what he is*; and most of our knowledge of God, is by this way: As when we say God is infinite, immense, immutable, they are negatives: He hath no limits, is confined to no place, admits of no change. \* When we remove from him what is inconsistent with his Being, we do more strongly assert his Being, and know more of him when we elevate him above all, and above our own capacity. And when we say God is a Spirit, 'tis a negation; he is not a Body; he consists not of various parts, extended one without and beyond another: He is not a Spirit so as our Souls are, to be the form of any Body: A Spirit, not as Angels and Souls are, but infinitely higher; we call him so, because in regard of our weakness, we have not any other term of excellency to express or conceive of him by: We transfer it to God in honour, because Spirit is the highest excellency in our nature: Yet we must apprehend God above any Spirit, since his Nature is so great, that he

\* Gamacheus  
Tom. 1. q. 3.  
Cap. 1. P. 42.

\* Coccei. sum.  
Theol. Cap. 8.



cannot be declared by human speech, perceived by human sense, or conceived by human understanding.

The second thing, *That God is a Spirit.*

\* Theol. Sedan.  
Part. 2. P. 1.  
\* Vossius Idolol.  
lib. 2. cap. 1.  
\* Fishes Instru-  
ment. l. 1. c. 35.

\* Some among the *Heathens* imagined God to have a Body; some thought him to have a Body of Air, some a Heavenly Body, some a human Body: \* And many of them ascribed bodies to their Gods; but bodies without blood, without corruption; bodies made up of the finest and thinnest Atomes; such bodies, which if compared with ours, were as nobodies. The *Sadducees* also, who denied all Spirits, and yet acknowledged a God, must conclude him to be a Body and no Spirit. Some among Christians have been of that opinion. *Tertullian* is charged by some, and excused by others: And some *Monks of Egypt* were so fierce for this Error, that they attempted to kill one *Theophilus* a Bishop, for not being of that judgment.

\* Our Error  
\* Plutarch. in-  
corporalis ratio  
divinus spiritus.  
Seneca.

But the *wiser Heathens* were of another mind, and esteemed it an *unkely thing* to have such imaginations of God. And some Christians have thought God only to be free from any thing of body, because he is omnipresent, immutable, he is only incorporeal and spiritual; all things else, even the *Angels* are clothed with bodies, though of a neater matter and a more active frame than ours; a pure spiritual Nature they allowed to no Being but God. Scripture and Reason meet together to assert the spirituality of God. Had God had the Lineaments of a Body, the *Gentiles* had not fallen under that accusation of *changing his Glory into that of a Corruptible Man*.\*

\* Rom. 1. 23.

This is signified by the name God gives himself, *Exod. 3. 14. I am that I am*, a simple, pure, uncompound Being, without any created mixture; as infinitely above the being of Creatures, as above the conceptions of Creatures, *Joh. 37. 23. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.* He is so much a Spirit, that he is the *Father of Spirits*, *Heb. 12. 9.* The Almighty Father is not of a Nature inferior to his Children: The Soul is a Spirit, it could not else exert actions without the assistance of the body, as the act of Understanding it self, and its own nature, the act of willing and willing things against the incitements and interest of the Body: It could not else conceive of God, Angels and immaterial substances: It could not else be so active, as with one glance to fetch a compass from Earth to Heaven, and by a sudden motion, to elevate the understanding from an earthly thought, to the thinking of things as high as the highest Heavens. If we have this opinion of our Souls which in the nobleness of their acts surmount the Body, without which the Body is but a dull unactive piece of clay; we must needs have a higher conception of God, than to clogg him with any matter, though of a finer temper than ours: We must conceive of him by the perfections of our Souls, without the vileness of our Bodies. If God made Man according to his Image, we must raise our thoughts of God according to the noblest part of that Image, and imagine the Exemplar or Copy, not to come short, but to exceed the thing copyed by it. God were not the most excellent substance, if he were not a Spirit: Spiritual substances are more excellent than bodily; the Soul of Man more excellent than other Animals; Angels more excellent than Men: They contain in their own nature, whatsoever dignity there is in the inferior Creatures. God must have therefore an excellency above all those, and therefore is intirely remote from the conditions of a Body.

\* Calov. Socin.  
Proflig. P. 129.  
130.

\* Amiral Sup.  
Heb. 9. p. 146.  
&c.

\* Tis a gross conceit therefore to think that God is such a Spirit as the Air is; for that is to be a body as the Air is, though it be a thin one; and if God were no more a Spirit than that, or than Angels, he would not be the most simple Being: \* Yet some think that the spiritual Deity was represented by the Air in the Ark of the Testament. It was unlawful to represent him by any Image that God had prohibited: Every thing about the Ark had a particular signification: The Gold and other Ornaments about it signified something of Christ, but were unfit to represent the Nature of God: A thing purely invisible and falling under nothing of sense, could not represent him to the mind of Man: The Air in the Ark was the fittest, it represented the invisibility of God, Air being imperceptible to our eyes. Air diffuseth it self through all parts of the world, it glides through secret passages into all Creatures, it fills the space between Heaven and Earth; there is no place wherein God is not present.

To evidence this,

1. If



1. *If God were not a Spirit, he could not be Creator.* All multitude begins in, and is reduced to unity. As above multitude there is an absolute unity; So above mixt Creatures, there is an absolute simplicity: You cannot conceive number without conceiving the beginning of it in that which was not number, *viz.* a unite: You cannot conceive any mixture, but you must conceive some simple thing to be the Original and Basis of it. The works of Art done by rational Creatures, have their Foundation in something Spiritual. Every *Artificer*, Watch-maker, Carpenter hath a model in his own mind of the work he designs to frame: The material and outward Fabrick is squared according to an inward and *Spiritual Idea*. A Spiritual Idea speaks a Spiritual faculty as the subject of it. God could not have an Idea of that vast number of Creatures he brought into being; if he had not had a Spiritual Nature. \* The wisdom whereby the world was Created could never be the fruit of a Corporeal nature; such natures are not capable of understanding and comprehending the things which are within the compass of their nature, much less of producing them: And therefore beasts which have only Corporeal faculties, move to objects by the force of their sense, and have no knowledge of things as they are comprehended by the understanding of Man. All acts of wisdom speak an intelligent and Spiritual agent: The effects of wisdom, goodness, power are so great and admirable, that they bespeak him a more perfect and eminent being, than can possibly be beheld under a bodily shape. Can a Corporeal substance put *Wisdom in the inward parts, and give understanding to the heart?* \*

\* Amiral. moral Tom. 1. pa. 282.

\* Job. 32. 14.

2. *If God were not a pure Spirit, he could not be one.* If God had a body, consisting of distinct members, as ours; or all of one nature, as the water and air are, yet he were then capable of division, and therefore could not be entirely one. Either those parts would be finite or infinite; if finite, they are not parts of God; for to be God and finite is a contradiction: If infinite, then there are as many infinities, as distinct members, and therefore as many Deities: Suppose this body had all parts of the same nature as air and water hath, every little part of air is as much air as the greatest, and every little part of water is as much water as the Ocean; so every little part of God would be as much God as the whole; as many particular Deities to make up God, as little Atomes to compose a body: What can be more absurd? If God had a body like a human body, and were compounded of body and Soul, of substance and quality, he could not be the most perfect unity; he would be made up of distinct parts, and those of a distinct nature, as the members of a human body are: Where there is the greatest unity, there must be the greatest simplicity; but God is one: As he is free from any change, so he is void of any multitude, Deut. 6. 4. *The Lord our God is one Lord.*

3. *If God had a body as we have, he would not be invisible.* Every material thing is not visible: The Air is a body yet invisible, but it is sensible; the cooling quality of it is felt by us at every breath, and we know it by our touch, which is the most material sense. Every body, that hath Members like to bodies, is visible: But God is invisible. \* The Apostle reckons it amongst his other perfections, 1 Tim. 1. 17. *Now unto the King, Eternal, Immortal, Invisible:* He is invisible to our sense, which beholds nothing but material and coloured things; and incomprehensible to our understanding that conceives nothing but what is finite. God is therefore a Spirit incapable of being seen, and infinitely incapable of being understood. If he be invisible, he is also Spiritual. If he had a body, and hid it from our eyes, he might be said not to be seen, but could not be said to be invisible. When we say a thing is visible, we understand that it hath such qualities which are the objects of sense, tho we may never see that, which is in its own nature is to be seen. God hath no such qualities as fall under the perception of our sense. His works are visible to us, but not his God-head. \* The nature of a human body is to be seen and handled, Christ gives us such a description of it, Luke 24. 39. *Handle me and see, for a Spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have:* But man hath been so far from seeing God, that it is impossible he can see him, 1 Tim. 6. 16. There is such a disproportion between an infinite object and a finite sense and understanding, that it is utterly impossible either to behold or comprehend him. But if God had a body more luminous and glorious than that of the Sun, he would be as well visible to us as the Sun, tho the immensity of that light would daze our eyes, and forbid any close inspection into

\* Daille. in Tim

\* Rom. 1. 20.



\* Job. 5. 27.  
\* Goulart. de  
Dieu p. 94.

\* 1 King. 22.  
19.

\* Goulart. de  
Dieu p. 95. 95.

him by the vertue of our sense: We have seen the shape and figure of the Sun, but *no man hath ever seen the shape of God.* \* If God had a body he were visible, tho he might not perfectly and fully be seen by us. \* As we see the Heavens, tho we see not the extension, latitude and greatness of them. Tho God hath manifested himself in a bodily shape, Gen. 18. 1. *And elsewhere, Jehovah appeared to Abraham:* Yet the substance of God was not seen, no more than the substance of Angels was seen in their Apparitions to men. A body was formed to be made visible by them, and such actions done in that body, that spake the person that did them, to be of a higher eminency than a bare Corporeal Creature: Sometimes a representation is made to the inward sense and imagination, as to *Michaiab*, \* and to *Isa. 6. chap. 1.* But they saw not the essence of God, but some Images and figures of him proportioned to their sense or imagination. *The Essence of God no man ever saw, nor can see.* Joh. 1. 18.

\* Nor doth it follow, that God hath a body, because *Jacob is said to see God Face to Face*, Gen. 32. 30. And *Moses had the like privilege*, Deut. 5. 10. This only signifies a fuller and clearer manifestation of God, by some representations offered to the bodily sense, or rather to the *inward Spirit*: For God tells *Moses he could not see his Face*, Exod. 33. 20. *And that none ever saw the similitude of God.* Deut. 4. 15. Were God a Corporeal substance he might in some measure be seen by Corporeal eyes.

4. *If God were not a Spirit, he could not be infinite.* All bodies are of a finite nature: Every body is material, and every material thing is terminated. The Sun, a vast body, hath a bounded greatness: The Heavens of a mighty bulk, yet have their limits. If God had a body he must consist of parts, those parts would be bounded and limited, and what ever is limited is of a finite vertue, and therefore below an infinite nature. Reason therefore tells us, that the most excellent nature, as God is, cannot be of a Corporeal condition; because of the limitation and other actions which belong to every body. God is infinite, *for the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him*, 2 Chron. 2. 6. The largest Heavens, and those imaginary spaces beyond the world, are no bounds to him. He hath an essence beyond the bounds of the world, and cannot be included in the vastness of the Heavens. If God be infinite, then he can have no parts in him; if he had, they must be finite, or infinite: Finite parts can never make up an infinite being. A vessel of Gold of a pound weight cannot be made of the quantity of an ounce. Infinite parts they cannot be, because then every part would be equal to the whole, as infinite as the whole, which is contradictory. We see in all things every part is less than the whole bulk that is composed of it: As every Member of a Man is less than the whole body of Man: If all the parts were finite, then God in his Essence were finite; and a finite God is not more excellent than a Creature: So that if God were not a Spirit, he could not be infinite.

5. *If God were not a Spirit, he could not be an independent being.* Whatsoever is compounded of many parts, depends either essentially or integrally upon those parts; as the essence of a man depends upon the conjunction and union of his two main parts, his Soul, and Body; when they are separated the essence of a Man ceaseth; and the perfection of a man depends upon every Member of the Body; So that if one be wanting the perfection of the whole is wanting: As if a man hath lost a limb, you call him not a perfect man; because that part is gone upon which his perfection as an intire man did depend: If God therefore had a body, the perfection of the Deity would depend upon every part of that body; and the more parts he were compounded of, the more his dependency would be multiplyed according to the number of those parts of the body: For that which is compounded of many parts is more dependent than that which is compounded of fewer.

And because God would be a dependent being if he had a body, he could not be the first being; for the compounding parts are in order of nature before that which is compounded by them; as the soul and body are before the man which results from the union of them. If God had parts and bodily Members as we have, or any composition, the Essence of God would result from those parts, and those parts be supposed to be before God. For that which is a part, is before that whose part it is. As in Artificial things you may conceive it: All the parts of a Watch or Clock, are in time before that Watch which is made by setting those parts together. In natural



tural things, you must suppose the Members of a Body framed, before you can call it a Man: So that the parts of this body are before that which is constituted by them. We can conceive no other of God, if he were not a pure, intire, unmixed Spirit: If he had distinct parts, he would depend upon them; those parts would be before him; his Essence would be the effect of those distinct parts, and so he would not be absolutely and intirely the first Being: But he is so, *Isa. 44. 6. I am the first, and I am the last.* He is the first; nothing is before him: Whereas if he had bodily parts, and those finite, it would follow, God is made up of those parts which are not God; and that which is not God, is in order of Nature before that which is God. So that we see if God were not a Spirit, he could not be independent.

6. *If God were not a Spirit, he were not immutable and unchangeable.* His immutability depends upon his simplicity. He is unchangeable in his Essence, because he is a pure and unmixed spiritual Being. Whatsoever is compounded of parts, may be divided into those parts, and resolved into those distinct parts which make up and constitute the Nature. Whatsoever is compounded, is changeable in its own nature, though it should never be changed. Adam who was constituted of Body and Soul, had he stood in Innocence, had not died; there had been no separation made between his Soul and Body whereof he was constituted, and his Body had not resolved into those principles of Dust from whence it was extracted. Yet in his own nature he was dissoluble into those distinct parts whereof he was compounded: And so the glorified Saints in Heaven, after the Resurrection, and the happy meeting of their Souls and Bodies in a new Marriage knot, shall never be dissolved: yet in their own nature they are mutable and dissoluble, and cannot be otherwise, because they are made up of such distinct parts that may be separated in their own nature, unless sustained by the grace of God: They are immutable by Will, the Will of God, not by Nature. God is immutable by Nature as well as Will: As he hath a necessary Existence, so he hath a necessary Unchangeableness, *Mal. 3. 6. The Lord change not.* He is as unchangeable in his Essence, as in his Veracity and Faithfulness: They are perfections belonging to his Nature. But if he were not a pure Spirit, he could not be immutable by Nature.

7. *If God were not a pure Spirit, He could not be omnipresent.* He is in Heaven above, and the Earth below: \* *He fills Heaven and Earth.* \* The Divine Essence is at once in Heaven and Earth; but it is impossible a Body can be in two places at one and the same time. Since God is every where, he must be spiritual. Had he a Body, he could not penetrate all things; he would be circumscribed in place. He could not be every where but in parts, not in the whole; one member in one place, and another in another; for to be confined to a particular place, is the property of a Body: But since he is diffused *through the whole World; higher than Heaven, deeper than Hell; longer than the Earth, broader than the Sea;* \* he hath not any corporeal matter. If he had a Body wherewith to fill Heaven and Earth, there could be no Body besides his own: 'Tis the Nature of Bodies to bound one another, and hinder the extending of one another. Two Bodies cannot be in the same place in the same point of Earth, one excludes the other: And it will follow hence, that we are nothing, no substances, meer illusions; there could be no place for any Body else. \* If his Body were as bigg as the World; as it must be, if with that he filled Heaven and Earth, there would not be room for him to move a hand or a foot, or extend a finger; for there would be no place remaining for the motion.

8. *If God were not a Spirit, he could not be the most perfect Being.* The more perfect any thing is in the rank of Creatures, the more spiritual and simple it is, as Gold is the more pure and perfect that hath least mixture of other Metals. If God were not a Spirit, there would be Creatures of a more excellent Nature than God; as Angels and Souls, which the Scripture calls Spirits, in opposition to Bodies. There is more of perfection in the first notion of a Spirit, than in the notion of a Body. God cannot be less perfect than his Creatures, and contribute an excellency of being to them which he wants himself. If Angels and Souls possess such an excellency, and God want that excellency; he would be less than his Creatures, and the excellency of the Effect, would exceed the excellency of the Cause. But every Creature, even the highest Creature, is infinitely short of the perfection of God; for whatsoever excellency they have, is finite and limited; 'tis but a spark from the Sun, a drop

\* Deut. 4. 32.  
\* Jer. 23. 24.

\* Job. 11. 8.

\* Gamacheus  
Theol. Tom. 1.  
Quos. 3. C. 1.



drop from the Ocean; but God is unboundedly perfect in the highest manner, without any limitation; and therefore above Spirits, Angels, the highest Creatures that were made by him: An infinite sublimity, a pure act, to which nothing can be added, from which nothing can be taken. *In him there is light and no darkness,\** spirituality without any matter, perfection without any shadow or taint of imperfection: Light pierceth into all things, preserves its own purity, and admits of no mixture of any thing else with it.

*Question.* It may be said, *If God be a Spirit, and it is impossible he can be otherwise than a Spirit; how comes God so often to have such Members as we have in our Bodies, ascribed to him; not only a Soul, but particular bodily parts; as heart, arms, hands, eyes, ears, face and back-parts?* And how is it that he is never called a Spirit in plain words, but in this Text by our Saviour?

\* Dan. 7. 9.  
\* Psal. 11. 4.

*Answer.* 'Tis true, many parts of the Body, and natural affections of the human nature, are reported of God in Scripture. *Head,\* Eyes and Eye-lids,\* Apple of the Eye, Mouth, &c.* our Affections also, *Grief, Joy, Anger, &c.* But it is to be considered,

\* *Legitur lex  
secund. ling. plu-  
rum. humanum,  
was the 11. say-  
ing.*

1. *That this is in condescension to our weakness.* God being desirous to make himself known to Man, whom he created for his Glory, humbles as it were his own Nature to such representations, as may suite and assist the capacity of the Creature: Since by the condition of our nature nothing erects a notion of it self in our understanding, but as it is conducted in by our sense. God hath served himself of those things which are most exposed to our sense, most obvious to our understandings, to give us some acquaintance with his own Nature, and those things which otherwise we were not capable of having any notion of. As our Souls are linkt with our Bodies, so our knowledge is linkt with our sense; that we can scarce imagin any thing at first but under a corporeal form and figure, till we come by great attention to the Object, to make by the help of reason, a separation of the spiritual substance from the corporeal fancy, and consider it in its own nature. We are not able to conceive a Spirit, without some kind of resemblance to something below it; nor understand the actions of a Spirit, without considering the operations of a human Body in its several Members. As the Glories of another Life are signified to us by the pleasures of this; so the Nature of God, by a gracious condescension to our capacities, is signified to us by a likeness to our own. The more familiar the things are to us which God uses to this purpose, the more proper they are to teach us what he intends by them.

\* *Ambr. de  
Trin. p. 218.  
219.*

*Answer.* 2. *All such representations are to signify the acts of God, as they bear some likeness to those, which we perform by those members he ascribes to himself.* So that those members ascribed to him, rather note his visible operations to us, than his invisible Nature; and signify that God doth some works like to those which men do, by the assistance of those Organs of their Bodies. \* So the wisdom of God is called his Eye, because he knows that with his mind, which we see with our eyes. The efficiency of God is called his Hand and Arm; because as we act with our hands, so doth God with his Power. The divine Efficacies are signified: By his eyes and ears, we understand his Omniscience; by his face, the manifestation of his Favour; by his mouth the revelation of his Will; by his nostrils, the acceptance of our Prayers; by his bowels, the tenderness of his Compassion; by his heart, the sincerity of his Affections: by his hand, the strength of his Power; by his feet, the ubiquity of his Presence. And in this, he intends instruction and comfort: By his eyes he signifies his watchfulness over us: By his ears, his readiness to hear the cry of the oppressed: \* By his Arm, his Power; an Arm to destroy his Enemies, and an Arm to relieve his People.\* All those are attributed to God to signify divine actions, which he doth without bodily organs, as we do with them.

\* *Psal. 34. 15.  
\* Isa. 51. 9.*

\* *Enchir. insti-  
tu. l. 4. c. 3.*

3. Consider also, *that only those members which are the instruments of the noblest actions, and under that consideration, are used by him to represent a notion of him to our minds.* Whatsoever is perfect and excellent, is ascribed to him, but nothing that savours of imperfection. \* The heart is ascribed to him, it being the principle of vital actions, to signify the Life that he hath in himself: Watchful and discerning eyes, not sleepy and lazy ones: A mouth to reveal his Will, not to take in food. To eat and sleep are



are never ascribed to him, nor those parts that belong to the preparing or transmitting nourishment to the several parts of the body, as stomach, liver, reins, nor bowels under that consideration, but as they are significant of compassion; but only those parts are ascribed to him whereby we acquire knowledge, as eyes and ears, the Organs of learning and wisdom: Or to Communicate it to others, as the mouth, lips, tongue, as they are the Instruments of speaking, not of tasting: Or those parts which signify strength and power, or whereby we perform the actions of Charity for the relief of others: Taste, and touch, senses that extend no further than to Corporal things, and are the grossest of all the senses, are never ascribed to him.

\* It were worth consideration, *whether this describing God by the Members of a human body were so much figuratively to be understood, as with respect to the incarnation of our Saviour, who was to assume the human nature and all the Members of a human body.*

\* *The Zanchius observation Tom. 2. de natura Dei lib. 1. cap. 4. Theol. 9.*

*Asaph* speaking in the person of God, Psal. 72. 1. *I will open my mouth in Parables:* In regard of God it is to be understood figuratively, but in regard of *Christ* literally, to whom it is applied, Matt. 13. 34. 35. And that Apparition, *Isa.* 6. which was the appearance of *Jehovah*, is applied to *Christ*, John 12. 40. 41.

\* After the report of the Creation, and the forming of man, we read of Gods speaking to him, but not of Gods appearing to him in any visible shape: A voice might be formed in the air to give man notice of his duty; some way of information he must have what positive Laws he was to observe, besides that Law which was engraven in his nature, which we call the Law of nature: And without a voice the knowledge of the Divine Will could not be so conveniently communicated to man: Tho God was heard in a voice, he was not seen in a shape: But after the fall we several times read of his appearing in such a form. Tho we read of his speaking before mans committing of sin, yet not of his walking, which is more Corporeal, till afterwards: \* [ Tho God would not have man believe him to be Corporeal, yet he judged it expedient to give some prenotices of that Divine incarnation which he had promised. ]

\* *Amirald. Metaph. Lib. 1. p. 2. 3. 294.*

5. *Therefore we must not conceive of the visible Deity according to the letter of such expressions, but the true intent of them.* Tho the Scripture speaks of his eyes and arm, yet it denies them to be arms of flesh. \* We must not conceive of God according to the Letter, but the design of the Metaphor. When we hear things described by Metaphorical expressions for the clearing them up to our fancy, we conceive not of them under that garb, but remove the vail by an act of our reason: When *Christ* is called a *Sun*, a *Vine*, *Bread*, is any so stupid as to conceive him to be a Vine with material branches and Clusters; or be of the same nature with a Loaf? But the things designed by such Metaphors are obvious to the conception of a mean understanding. If we would conceive God to have a body like a man, because he describes himself so, we may conceit him to be like a Bird, because he is mentioned with wings; \* or like a *Lion* or *Leopard*, because he likens himself to them in the Acts of his strength and fury. \* He is called a *rock*, a *horn*, *fire*, to note his strength and wrath: If any be so stupid as to think God to be really such, they would make him not only a man, but worse than a Monster.

\* *Gen. 3. 2.*

\* *Amirald.*

\* *Job. 10. 3. 2 Chron. 32. 8.*

\* *Psal. 35. 7. Hos. 13. 7. 2.*

\* *Onkelos*, the *Chalde Paraphrast* upon parts of the Scripture, was so tender of expressing the Notion of any Corporeity in God, that when he meets with any expressions of that nature, he translates them according to the true intent of them; as when God is said to descend, Gen. 11. 5. which implies a local motion, a motion from one place to another, he translates it, *and God revealed himself.* We should conceive of God according to the design of the expressions: When we read of his eyes, we should conceive his Omniscience; of his hand his power; of his sitting, his immutability; of his Throne, his Majesty; and conceive of him as surmounting, not only the grossness of bodies, but the Spiritual excellency of the most dignified Creatures; something so perfect, great, spiritual, as nothing can be conceived higher and purer.

\* *Maimon. More Nove. par. 1. cap. 27.*

\* *Christ*, saith one, is truly *Deus figuratus*; and for his sake, was it more easily permitted to the *Jews* to think of God in the shape of a man.

\* *Mores conjectura cabalistica p. 122.*

Use. *If God be a pure Spiritual being, then*

1. *Man is not the image of God, according to his external bodily form and figure.*

The



\* Col. 3. 10.

\* Petav. Theol.  
Dog. Tom. 1.  
lib. 2. cap. 1.  
p. 1. 4.  
\* Gen. 1. 26.

The image of God in man consisted not in what is seen, but in what is not seen; not in the conformation of the members, but rather in the Spiritual faculties of the Soul; or most of all in the holy endowments of those faculties, Eph. 4. 24. *That ye put on the new man which after God is Created in righteousness and true holiness.* \* The image which is restored by redeeming grace, was the image of God by Original nature. The image of God cannot be in that part which is common to us with beasts, but rather in that wherein we excell all living Creatures, in reason, understanding, and an immortal Spirit. God expressly saith, that none *saw a similitude* of him Deut. 4. 15, 16. which had not been true, if man in regard of his body had been the image and similitude of God; for then a figure of God had been seen every day, as often as we saw a man or beheld our selves. Nor would the *Apostles* argument stand good, Acts 17. 29. *That the Godhead is not like to stone graven by art*, if we were not the off-spring of God and bore the stamp of his nature in our Spirits rather than our bodies. \* It was a fancy of *Engubinus*, that when God set upon the actual Creation of man, he took a bodily form for an Exemplar of that which he would express in his work, and therefore that the words of Moses \* are to be understood of the body of man; because there was in Man such a shape which God had then assumed. To let alone Gods forming himself a body for that work as a groundless fancy; Man can in no wise be said to be the image of God, in regard of the substance of his body; but beasts may as well be said to be made in the Image of God, whose bodies have the same Members as the body of Man for the most part, and excell Men in the acuteness of the senses and swiftness of their motion, agility of body, greatness of strength, and in some kind of ingenuities also, wherein Man hath been a Scholar to the brutes, and beholden to their skill. The Soul comes nearest the nature of God, as being a Spiritual substance; yet considered singly in regard of its Spiritual substance, cannot well be said to be the image of God: A beast, because of its Corporeity, may as well be called the image of a Man; for there is a greater similitude between man and a brute in the rank of bodies, than there can be between God and the highest Angels, in the rank of Spirits. If it doth not consist in the substance of the Soul, much less can it in any similitude of the body. This Image consisted partly in the state of man, as he had dominion over the Creatures; partly in the nature of man as he was an intelligent being, and thereby was capable of having a grant of that Dominion; but principally in the conformity of the Soul with God in the frame of his Spirit and the holiness of his actions. Not at all in the figure and form of his body Physically, tho morally there might be, as there was a rectitude in the body as an instrument to conform to the holy motions of the soul, as the holiness of the soul sparkled in the actions and members of the body. If man were like God because he hath a body, whatsoever hath a body, hath some resemblance to God, and may be said to be in part his image: But the truth is, the essence of all Creatures cannot be an image of the immense essence of God.

\* Jamblyc.  
protrept. cap. 21.  
Symb. 24.

\* Austin de  
Civitat. Dei  
lib. 4. cap. 31.  
out of Varro.  
\* Tacitus.  
\* Gerhard loc.  
Commun. vol. 4.  
Exegesis de na-  
tura Dei cap. 8.  
§ 1.

2. If God be a pure Spirit; *Tis unreasonable to frame any Image or picture of God.* \* Some Heathens have been wiser in this than some Christians: *Pythagoras* forbade his Scholars to engrave any shape of him upon a Ring, because he was not to be comprehended by sense, but conceived only in our minds; our hands are as unable to fashion him as our eyes to see him. \* The ancient *Romans* worshipped their Gods 170. years before any material representations of them; \* and the Ancient Idolatrous *Germans* thought it a wicked thing to represent God in a human shape. Yet some, and those no *Romanists*, labour to defend the making Images of God in the resemblance of man; because he is so represented in Scripture, he may be, \* saith one conceived so in our minds and figured so to our sense. If this were a good reason, why may he not be pictured as a Lyon, Horn, Eagle, Rock, since he is under such *Metaphors* shadowed to us? The same ground there is for the one as for the other: What tho man be a nobler Creature, God hath no more the body of a man, than that of an Eagle; and some perfections in other Creatures represent some excellencies in his nature and actions, which cannot be figur'd by a human shape, as strength by the Lyon, swiftness and readines by the wings of the Bird. But God hath absolutely prohibited the making any Image whatsoever of him, and that with terrible threatnings, Exod. 20. 5. *I the Lord am a jealous God visiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon their Children*, and Deut. 5. 8, 9. After God had given the *Israelites* the



the Commandment wherein he forbad them to have any other Gods before him, he forbids all figuring of him by the hand of man ; \* not only Images, but any likeness of him either by things in Heaven, in the earth or in the water. How often doth he discover his indignation by the Prophets against them that offer to mould him in a Creature form ? This law was not to serve a particular dispensation or to endure a particular time, but it was a declaration of his Will, invariable in all places and all times ; being founded upon the immutable nature of his being, and therefore agreeable to the Law of nature ; otherwise not chargeable upon the Heathens. And therefore when God had declared his nature and his works in a stately and Majestick eloquence, he demands of them, *To whom they would liken him, or what likeness they would compare unto him ?* Isa. 40. 18. Where they could find any thing that would be a lively image and resemblance of his infinite excellency ? Founding it upon the infiniteness of his nature, which necessarily implies the Spirituality of it. God is infinitely above any Statue ; and those that think to draw God by a stroke of a pencil, or form him by the engravings of Art, are more stupid than the Statues themselves.

\* *Amiraut. Morale Chrestienne*  
Tom. 1. p. 294.

To shew the unreasonableness of it ; Consider,

1. *Tis impossible to fashion any image of God.* If our more capacious Souls cannot grasp his nature, our weaker sense cannot frame his image : Tis more possible of the two, to comprehend him in our minds, than to frame him in an image to our sense. He inhabits inaccessible light : As it is impossible for the eye of man to see him, tis impossible for the art of man to paint him upon walls, and carve him out of wood. None knows him but himself, none can describe him but himself. \* Can we draw a figure of our own Souls, and express that part of our selves, wherein we are most like to God ? Can we extend this to any bodily figure and divide it into parts ? How can we deal so with the Original Copy, whence the first draught of our Souls was taken, and which is infinitely more Spiritual than Men or Angels ? No Corporeal thing can represent a Spiritual substance ; there is no proportion in nature between them. God is a simple, infinite, immense, eternal, invisible, incorruptible being : A Statue is a compounded, finite, limited, temporal, visible and corruptible body. God is a living Spirit ; but a Statue, nor sees, nor hears, nor perceives any thing. But suppose God had a body, tis impossible to mould an Image of it in the true glory of that body : Can the Statue of an excellent *Monarch* represent the Majesty and air of his Countenance, tho made by the skilfullest workman in the world ? If God had a body in some measure suited to his excellency, were it possible for Man to make an exact Image of him, who cannot picture the light, heat, motion, magnitude and dazzling property of the Sun ? The excellency of any Corporeal nature of the least Creature, the temper, instinct, artifice, are beyond the power of a Carving tool ; much more is God.

\* *Cocceius sum. Theol. cap. 9.*  
p. 47. § 35.

2. *To make any Corporeal representations of God is unworthy of God.* 'Tis a disgrace to his nature. Whosoever thinks a Carnal corruptible Image to be fit for a representation of God, renders God no better than a Carnal and Corporeal being. 'Tis a kind of debasing an Angel, who is a Spiritual nature, to represent him in a bodily shape, who is as far removed from any fleshliness as Heaven from Earth ; much more to degrade the glory of the Divine nature to the lineaments of a man. The whole stock of Images is but a lie of God, Jer. 10. 8, 14. *A Doctrine of vanities and falsehood* : It represents him in a false garb to the world, and sinks his glory into that of a corruptible Creature. \* It impairs the reverence of God in the minds of men, and by degrees may debase mens apprehensions of God, and be a means to make them believe he is such a one as themselves ; and that not being free from the figure, he is not also free from the imperfections of their bodies. Corporeal Images of God were the fruits of base imaginations of him ; and as they sprung from them, so they contribute to a greater corruption of the notions of the Divine nature : The *Heathens* began their first representations of him by the Image of a corruptible Man, then of birds, till they descended, not only to four footed beasts, but creeping things, even Serpents, as the *Apostle* seems to intimate in his enumeration, Rom. 1. 23. It had been more honourable to have continued in human representations of him, than have sunk so low as beasts and Serpents, the baser Images ; tho the first had been infinitely

\* Rom. 1. 25.

\* Rom. 1. 23.



\* Hosea 10. 15.  
רעת עתכם

unworthy of him, he being more above a man, though the noblest Creature, than Man is above a Worm, a Toad, or the most despicable creeping thing upon the Earth. To think we can make an Image of God of a piece of Marble, or an Ingot of Gold, is a greater debasing of him, than it would be of a great Prince, if you should represent him in the statue of a Frog. When the *Israelites* represented God by a Calf, 'tis said, *they sinned a great sin*, *Exod. 32. 31.* And the sin of *Jeroboam*, who intended only a representation of God by the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, is called more emphatically, \* *the wickedness of your wickedness*, the very skum and dreggs of wickedness. As men debased God by this, so God debased men for this; he degraded the *Israelites* into Captivity under the worst of their Enemies, and punished the Heathens with spiritual Judgments, as *uncleaness* through the lusts of their own hearts, *Rom. 1. 24.* which is repeated again in other expressions, *v. 26, 27.* as a meet recompence for their disgracing the spiritual nature of God. Had God been like to Man, they had not offended in it: But I mention this, to shew a probable reason of those base lusts which are in the midst of us, that have scarce been exceeded by any Nation, *viz.* the unworthy and unspiritual conceits of God, which are as much a debasing of him as material Images were when they were more rife in the world; and may be as well the cause of those spiritual Judgments upon men, as the worshipping molten and carved Images were the cause of the same upon the Heathen.

\* Daille Super  
Cor. 1. 10. Ser.

3.  
\* Gen. 31. 30.  
34.

\* Gen. 3. 16, 17.

3. *Yet this is natural to Man.* Wherein we may see the contrariety of Man to God. Though God be a Spirit, yet there is nothing Man is more prone to, than to represent him under a corporeal form. The most famous Guides of the Heathen world have fashioned him, not only according to the more honorable Images of men, but bestialized him in the form of a Brute. The *Egyptians*, whose Country was the School of Learning to *Greece*, were notoriously guilty of this brutishness in worshipping an *Ox* for an Image of their God; and the *Philistines* their *Dagon* in a figure composed of the Image of a Woman and a Fish: \* Such representations were ancient in the Oriental parts. The Gods of *Laban* that he accuseth *Jacob* of stealing from him, are supposed to be little figures of men. \* Such was the *Israelites Golden-Calf*; their worship was not terminated on the Image, but they worshipped the true God under that representation: They could not be so brutish as to call a Calf their Deliverer, and give to him great a Title, (*these be thy Gods oh Israel, which brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt*, *Exod. 32. 4.*) or that which they knew belonged to the true God, the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*. \* They knew the Calf to be formed of their Ear-rings; but they had consecrated it to God as a representation of him: Though they chose the form of the *Egyptian Idol*; yet they knew that *Apis*, *Osiris* and *Isis* the Gods the *Egyptians* adored in that figure, had not wrought their Redemption from Bondage, but would have used their force, had they been possessed of any, to have kept them under the Yoke, rather than have freed them from it: The Feast also which they celebrated before that Image, is called by *Aaron* the Feast of the Lord, *Exod. 32. 5.* a Feast to *Jehovah*, the incommunicable name of the Creator of the world: 'Tis therefore evident, that both the Priest and the People pretended to serve the true God, not any false Divinity of *Egypt*: That God who had rescued them from *Egypt* with a mighty hand, divided the Red-Sea before them, destroyed their Enemies, conducted them, fed them by miracle, spoken to them from Mount *Sinai*, and amazed them by his Thundrings and Lightnings when he instructed them by his Law; a God they could not so soon forget. And with this representing God by that Image, they are charged by the *Psalmist*, *Psal. 106. 19, 20.* *they made a Calf in Horeb, and changed their glory into the similitude of an Ox that eateth Grass*: They changed their glory, that is, God the glory of *Israel*; so that they took this figure for the Image of the true God of *Israel*, their own God; not the God of any other Nation in the world. *Jeroboam* intended no other by his Calves, but Symbols of the presence of the true God, instead of the Ark and the Propitiatory which remained among the Jews. We see the inclination of our Natures in the practice of the *Israelites*; a People chosen out of the whole world to bear up Gods name, and preserve his glory: And in that the Images of God were so soon set up in the Christian Church; and to this day, the picture of God in the shape of an old man, is visible in the Temples of the *Romanists*.

'Tis prone to the Nature of Man.



4. To represent God by a corporeal Image, and to worship him in and by that Image, is Idolatry. Though the Israelites did not acknowledge the Calf to be God, nor intended a worship to any of the Egyptian Deities by it; but worshipped that God in it, who had so lately and miraculously delivered them from a cruel Servitude; and could not in natural reason judge him to be clothed with a bodily shape, much less to be like an Ox that eateth grass; yet the Apostle brings no less a charge against them, than that of Idolatry, 1 Cor. 10. 7. he calls them Idolaters, who before that Calf kept a Feast to Jehovah, citing Exod. 32. 5. Suppose we could make such an Image of God as might perfectly represent him; yet since God hath prohibited it, shall we be wiser than God? He hath sufficiently manifested himself in his Works without Images: He is seen in the Creatures; more particularly in the Heavens, which declare his Glory. His Works are more excellent representations of him, as being the works of his own hands, than any thing that is the Product of the Art of Man. His Glory sparkles in the Heavens, Sun, Moon and Stars, as being magnificent pieces of his Wisdom and Power; yet the kissing the hand to the Sun or the Heavens, as representatives of the Excellency and Majesty of God, is Idolatry in Scripture account, and a denial of God; \* a prostituting the glory of God to a Creature:

\* Either the worship is terminated on the Image it self, and then it is confelld by all to be Idolatry, because it is a giving that worship to a Creature which is the sole right of God; or not terminated in the Image, but in the Object represented by it; 'tis then a foolish thing; we may as well terminate our worship on the true Object without, as with an Image. An erected Statue is no sign or symbol of Gods special presence, as the Ark, Tabernacle, Temple were. It is no part of divine institution; has no Authority of a Command to support it; no Cordial of a promise to encourage it; and the Image being infinitely distant from, and below the Majesty and Spirituality of God, cannot constitute one object of worship with him. To put a Religious Character upon any Image formed by the corrupt imagination of Man, as a representation of the invisible and spiritual Deity; is to think the God-head to be like silver and gold, or stone graven by art and mans device.\*

\* Job. 31. 26  
27. 28.  
Chin. Predict.  
Part. 2. P. 252.  
\* Law/in. Body  
Divin. P. 161

3. This Doctrine will direct us in our conceptions of God, as a pure perfect Spirit, than which nothing can be imagined more perfect, more pure, more spiritual.

\* Acts 17. 29.

1. We cannot have an adequate or suitable conception of God: He dwells in inaccessible light; inaccessible to the acuteness of our fancy, as well as the weakness of our sense. If we could have thoughts of him, as high and excellent as his Nature; our conceptions must be as infinite as his Nature. All our imaginations of him cannot represent him, because every created species is finite; it cannot therefore represent to us a full and substantial notion of an infinite Being. We cannot speak or think worthily enough of him, who is greater than our words, vaster than our understandings. Whatsoever we speak or think of God, is handed first to us by the notice we have of some perfection in the Creature, and explains to us some particular excellency of God, rather than the fulness of his Essence. No Creature, nor all Creatures together, can furnish us with such a magnificent notion of God, as can give us a clear view of him. Yet God in his word is pleased to step below his own excellency, and point us to those excellencies in his works, whereby we may ascend to the knowledge of those excellencies which are in his Nature. But the Creatures, whence we draw our lessons being finite, and our understandings being finite, 'tis utterly impossible to have a notion of God commensurate to the immensity and spirituality of his Being. [\* God is not like to visible Creatures, nor is there any proportion between him and the most spiritual]. We cannot have a full notion of a spiritual Nature; much less can we have of God, who is a Spirit above Spirits. No Spirit can clearly represent him: The Angels that are great Spirits, are bounded in their extent, finite in their being, and of a mutable Nature.

\* Anyraut Moral. Tom. 1.  
P. 289.

Yet though we cannot have a suitable conception of God, we must not content our selves without any conception of him. 'Tis our sin not to endeavour after a true notion of him: 'Tis our sin to rest in a mean and low notion of him, when our reason tells us we are capable of having higher: But if we ascend as high as we can, though we shall then come short of a suitable notion of him; this is not our sin, but our weakness. God is infinitely superior to the choicest conceptions; not only of



a sinner, but of a Creature. If all conceptions of God below the true nature of God were sin, there is not a holy Angel in Heaven free from sin; because tho' they are the most capacious Creatures, yet they cannot have such a Notion of an infinite being as is fully suitable to his nature, unless they were infinite as he himself is.

2. But however, *we must by no means conceive of God, under a human or Corporeal shape.* Since we cannot have conceptions honourable enough for his nature, we must take heed we entertain not any which may debase his nature: Tho' we cannot comprehend him as he is, we must be careful not to fancy him to be what he is not. 'Tis a vain thing to conceive him with human lineaments: We must think higher of him, than to ascribe to him so mean a shape: We deny his Spirituality when we fancy him under such a form: He is Spiritual, and between that which is Spiritual and that which is Corporeal, there is no resemblance. \* Indeed Daniel saw God in a human form, Daniel. 7. 9. *The Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hairs of his head like pure Wool;* he is described as coming to Judgment; tis not meant of Christ probably, because Christ ver. 13. is called the *Son of Man* coming near to the *Ancient of days*. This is not the proper shape of God, for no man hath seen his shape. It was a vision wherein such representations were made, as were accommodated to the inward sense of Daniel; Daniel saw him in a rapture or extasy, wherein outward senses are of no use: God is described, not as he is in himself, of a human form, but in regard of his fitness to Judge: *White* notes the purity and simplicity of the Divine nature: *Ancient of days* in regard of his eternity; *white hair* in regard of his prudence and wisdom, which is more eminent in age than youth, and more fit to discern causes and to distinguish between right and wrong. Visions are riddles and must not be understood in a literal sense. We are to watch against such determinate conceptions of God. Vain imaginations do easily infest us; Tinder will not sooner take fire than our natures kindle into wrong Notions of the Divine Majesty. We are very apt to fashion a God like our selves: We must therefore look upon such representations of God, as accommodated to our weakness: And no more think them to be literal descriptions of God, as he is in himself, than we will think the image of the Sun in the water to be the true Sun in the Heavens. We may indeed conceive of Christ as man, who hath in Heaven the vestment of our nature, and is *Deus figuratus*, tho' we cannot conceive the God-head under a human shape.

\* Episco. instit. li. 4. § 2. c. 10.

1. *To have such a fancy is to disparage and wrong God.* A Corporeal fancy of God is as ridiculous in it self and as injurious to God, as a wooden Statue. The capricious of our imagination are often more monstrous than the images which are the works of art: 'Tis as irreligious to measure Gods essence by our line, his perfections by our imperfections, as to measure his thoughts and actions by the weakness and unworthiness of our own. This is to limit an infinite essence, and pull him down to our scanty measures, and render that which is unconceivably above us, equal with us. 'Tis impossible we can conceive God after the manner of, we a body but must bring him down to the proportion of a body, which is to diminish his glory, and stoop him below the dignity of his nature. God is a pure Spirit, he hath nothing of the nature and tincture of a body; whosoever therefore conceives of him as having a bodily form, tho' he fancy the most beautiful and comely body, instead of owning his dignity, detracts from the supereminent excellency of his nature and blessedness. When men fancy God like themselves in their Corporeal nature, they will soon make a progress, and ascribe to him their corrupt nature; and while they clothe him with their bodies, invest him also in the infirmities of them. God is a *jealous God*, very sensible of any disgrace, and will be as much incensed against an *inward Idolatry* as an outward: That \* Command which forbade Corporeal images, would not indulge carnal imaginations, since the nature of God is as much wronged by unworthy images erected in the fancy as by statues carved out of stone or metals: One as well as the other is a deserting of our true spouse and committing Adultery, one with a material image, and the other with a carnal Notion of God. Since God humbles himself to our apprehensions, we should not debase him in thinking him to be that in his nature, which he makes only a resemblance of himself to us.

\* Exod. 20. 4.

2. *To have such fancies of God, will obstruct and pollute our worship of him.* How is it possible to give him a right worship, of whom we have so debasing a Notion? We shall



shall never think a corporeal Deity, worthy of a dedication of our Spirits. The hating Instruction, and casting Gods word behind the back, is charged upon the imagination they had, that *God was such a one as themselves*, Psal. 50. 17. 21. Many of the wiser *Heathens* did not judge their Statues to be their Gods, or their Gods to be like their Statues; but suited them to their politick designs; and judged them a good invention to keep people within the bounds of Obedience and Devotion, by such visible figures of them, which might imprint a reverence and fear of those Gods upon them: But these were false measures: A despised and undervalued God, is not an Object of Petition or Affection: Who would address seriously to a God he has low apprehensions of? The more raised thoughts we have of him, the viler sense we shall have of our selves: They would make us humble and self abhorrent in our supplications to him, *Job. 42. 6. wherefore I abhor my self, &c.*

3. Though we must not conceive of God, as of a human or Corporeal shape; yet we cannot think of God, without some reflection upon our own being. We cannot conceive him to be an intelligent being, but we must make some comparison between him and our own understanding nature, to come to a knowledge of him. Since we are inclosed in bodies, we apprehend nothing but what comes in by sense, and what we in some sort measure by sensible Objects. And in the consideration of those things, which we desire to abstract from sense, we are fain to make use of the assistances of sense and visible things: And therefore when we frame the highest notion, there will be some similitude of some corporeal thing in our fancy; and though we would spiritualize our thoughts, and aim at a more abstracted and raised understanding, yet there will be some dreggs of matter sticking to our conceptions; yet we still judge by argument and reasoning, what the thing is we think of under those material Images. \* A corporeal Image will follow us, as the shadow doth

\* Nazianzen's

\* Amiraux Morale Tom. II. P. 180, &c.

the body: While we are in the body, and surrounded with fleshly matter, we cannot think of things without some help from corporeal representations: Something of sense will interpose it self in our purest conceptions of spiritual things; for the faculties which serve for contemplation, are either corporeal, as the sense and fancy, or so allyed to them, that nothing passes into them but by the Organs of the body; so that there is a natural inclination to figure nothing but under a corporeal notion, till by an attentive application of the mind and reason to the object thought upon, we separate that which is bodily from that which is spiritual, and by degrees ascend to that true notion of that we think upon, and would have a due conception of in our mind. Therefore God tempers the declaration of himself to our weakness, and the condition of our Natures: He condescends to our littleness and narrowness, when he declares himself by the similitude of bodily members. As the light of the Sun is tempered, and diffuseth it self to our sense through the air and vapours, that our weak eyes may not be too much dazzled with it: Without it we could not know or judge of the Sun, because we could have no use of our sense, which we must have before we can judge of it in our understanding: So we are not able to conceive of spiritual Beings in the purity of their own nature, without such a temperament, and such shadows to usher them into our minds. And therefore we find the Spirit of God accommodates himself to our contracted and teddered capacities, and uses such expressions of God, as are suited to us in this state of flesh wherein we are: And therefore because we cannot apprehend God in the simplicity of his own Being, and his undivided Essence, he draws the representations of himself from several Creatures and several actions of those Creatures: As sometimes he is said to be angry, to walk, to sit, to fly; not that we should rest in such conceptions of him, but take our rise from this foundation, and such perfections in the Creatures, to mount up to a knowledge of Gods nature by those several steps, and conceive of him by those divided Excellencies, because we cannot conceive of him in the purity of his own Essence. \* We cannot possibly think or speak of God, unless we transfer the names of created perfections to him; yet we are to conceive of them in a higher manner when we apply them to the Divine Nature, than when we consider them in the several Creatures formally, exceeding those perfections and excellencies which are in the Creature, and in a more excellent manner: \* [as one

\* Lessius.

\* Tovey on the Commandments. P. 112.

those



those apprehensions of him from any way offending against his Divine Nature ] These are not notions so much suted to the nature of God as the weakness of man : They are helps to our meditations, but ought not to be formal conceptions of him. We may assist our selves in our apprehensions of him, by considering the subtilty and spirituality of Air ; and considering the members of a body, without thinking him to be air, or to have any corporeal member. Our reason tells us, that whatsoever is a body, is limited and bounded ; and the notion of infiniteness and bodiliness, cannot agree and consist together : And therefore what is offered by our fancy should be purified by our reason.

4. *Therefore we are to elevate and refine all our notions of God, and spiritualize our conceptions of him.* Every man is to have a conception of God ; therefore he ought to have one of the highest elevation. Since we cannot have a full notion of him, we should endeavour to make it as high and as pure as we can. Though we cannot conceive of God, but some corporeal representations or images in our minds will be conversant with us, as motes in the Air when we look upon the Heavens ; yet our conceptions may and must rise higher : As when we see the draught of the Heavens and Earth in a Globe, or a Kingdom in a Map, it helps our conceptions, but doth not terminate them : We conceive them to be of a vast extent, far beyond that short description of them : So we should endeavour to refine every representation of God, to rise higher and higher, and have our apprehensions still more purified ; separating the perfect from the imperfect, casting away the one, and greatning the other ; conceive him to be a Spirit diffused through all, containing all, perceiving all. All the perfections of God are infinitely elevated above the excellencies of the Creatures ; above whatsoever can be conceived by the clearest and most piercing understanding. The Nature of God as a Spirit, is infinitely superior to whatsoever we can conceive perfect in the notion of a created Spirit. Whatsoever God is, he is infinitely so : He is infinite Wisdom, infinite Goodness, infinite Knowledge, infinite Power, infinite Spirit, infinitely distant from the weakness of Creatures, infinitely mounted above the excellencies of Creatures : As easie to be known that he is, as impossible to be comprehended what he is.

Conceive of him as excellent, without any imperfection : A Spirit without parts ; great without quantity ; perfect without quality ; every where without place ; Powerful without members ; understanding without ignorance ; wise without reasoning ; light without darkness ; infinitely more excelling the beauty of all Creatures, than the light in the Sun pure and unviolated exceeds the splendor of the Sun dispersed and divided through a cloudy and misty Air : And when you have risen to the highest, conceive him yet infinitely above all you can conceive of Spirit, and acknowledge the infirmity of your own minds. And whatsoever conception comes into your minds, say this is not God ; God is more than this : If I could conceive him, he were not God ; for God is incomprehensibly above whatsoever I can say, whatsoever I can think and conceive of him.

4. Inference. If God be a Spirit, *no corporeal thing can defile him.* Some bring an Argument against the Omnipresence of God, that it is a disparagement to the Divine Essence to be every where, in nasty Cottages, as well as beautiful Palaces and garnisht Temples. What place can defile a Spirit ? Is Light, which approaches to the nature of Spirit polluted by shining upon a Dung-hill, or a Sun-beam tainted by darting upon a Quag-mire ? Doth an Angel contract any soyl, by stepping into a nasty Prison to deliver *Peter* ? What can steam from the most noysom body, to pollute the spiritual nature of God ? As he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity\*, so he is of a more spiritual substance, than to contract any physical pollution from the places where he doth diffuse himself. Did our Saviour who had a true body, derive any taint from the Lepers he touched, the diseases he cured, or the Devils he expell'd ? God is a pure Spirit ; plungeth himself into no filth ; is dasht with no spot by being present with all bodies. Bodies only receive defilement from bodies.

5. Inference. *If God be a Spirit, he is active and communicative.* He is not clogg'd with heavy and sluggish matter, which is cause of dulness and inactivity. The more subtil thin, and approaching neerer the Nature of a Spirit any thing is, the more diffusive it is. Air is a gliding substance ; spreads it self through all Regions ; peirceth in-

\* Heb. 1. 13.



into all bodies; it fills the space between Heaven and Earth; there is nothing but partakes of the virtue of it. Light, which is an emblem of Spirit, insinuates it self into all places, refresheth all things. As Spirits are fuller, so they are more overflowing, more piercing, more operative than bodies. The *Egyptian* Horses were weak things, because they were *Flesh and not Spirit*\*: The Soul being a Spirit conveys more to the Body, than the Body can to it. What cannot so great a Spirit do for us? What cannot so great a Spirit work in us? God being a Spirit above all Spirits, can pierce into the Center of all Spirits; make his way into the most secret recesses; stamp what he pleases: 'Tis no more to him to turn our Spirits, than to make a Wilderness become Waters, and speak a Chaos into a beautiful frame of Heaven and Earth: He can act our souls with infinite more ease, than our souls can act our bodies; he can fix in us what motions, frames, inclinations he pleases; he can come and settle in our hearts with all his Treasures. 'Tis an encouragement to confide in him, when we petition him for spiritual Blessings: As he is a Spirit, he is possessed with *spiritual Blessings*.\* A Spirit delights to bestow things suitable to its Nature, do Bodies are to communicate what is agreeable to theirs: As he is a Father of *Spirits*, we may go to him for the *Welfare of our Spirits*; he being a Spirit, is as able to repair our Spirits, as he was to create them.

\* *Isay* 31. 3.

\* *Eph.* 1. 3.

As he is a Spirit, he is indefatigable in acting: The members of the body tire and flag; but whoever heard of a Soul wearied with being active? Whoever heard of a *weary Angel*? In the purest Simplicity, there is the greatest Power, the most efficacious Goodness, the most reaching Justice to affect the Spirit, that can insinuate it self every where to punish wickedness without weariness, as well as to comfort goodness. God is active, because he is Spirit; and if we be like to God, the more spiritual we are, the more active we shall be.

6. Inference. *God being a Spirit, is immortal.* His being immortal, and being invisible are joyned together.\* Spirits are in their nature incorruptible; they can only perish by that hand that framed them. Every compounded thing is subject to mutation; but God being a pure and simple Spirit, is without corruption, without any shadow of change.\* Where there is composition, there is some kind of repugnancy of one part against the other; and where there is repugnancy, there is a capability of dissolution. God in regard of his infinite spirituality, hath nothing in his own nature contrary to it; can have nothing in himself which is not himself. The world perishes; friends change and are dissolved; bodies moulder, because they are mutable. God is a Spirit in the highest excellency and glory of Spirits; nothing is beyond him; nothing above him; no contrariety within him: This is our comfort, if we devote our selves to him; this God is our God; this Spirit is our Spirit; this is our all, our immutable, our incorruptible support; a Spirit that cannot die and leave us.

\* *1 Tim.* 1. 17.

\* *James* 1. 17.

7. Inference. If God be a Spirit, *we see how we can only converse with him by our Spirits.* Bodies and Spirits are not suitable to one another: We can only see, know, embrace a Spirit with our Spirits. He judges not of us by our corporeal actions, nor our external devotions, by our masks and disguises: He fixes his eye upon the frame of the heart, bends his ear to the groans of our Spirits: He is not pleased with outward pomp: He is not a Body; therefore the beauty of Temples, delicacy of Sacrifices, fumes of Incense are not grateful to him; by those or any external action, we have no communion with him: A Spirit when *broken*, is his delightful *Sacrifice*\*; We must therefore have our Spirits fitted for him, *be renewed in the spirit of our minds*\*, that we may be in a posture to live with him, and have an intercourse with him. We can never be united to God, but in our Spirits: Bodies unite with Bodies, Spirits with Spirits. The more spiritual any thing is, the more closely doth it unite. Air hath the closest union, nothing meets together sooner than that, when the parts are divided by the interposition of a body.

\* *Psal.* 51. 17.

\* *Eph.* 4. 23.

8. Inference. If God be a Spirit, *he can only be the true satisfaction of our Spirits.* Spirit can only be fill'd with Spirit. Content flows from likeness and suitability: As we have a resemblance to God in regard of the spiritual nature of our Soul, so we can have no satisfaction but in him. Spirit can no more be really satisfied with that which is corporeal, than a beast can delight in the company of an Angel. Corporeal things can no more fill a hungry Spirit, than pure Spirit can feed an hungry Body:



Body. God the highest Spirit, can only reach out a full content to our spirits. Man is Lord of the Creation; nothing below him can be fit for his converse; nothing above him offers it self to his converse but God. We have no correspondence with Angels: The influence they have upon us, the protection they afford us, is secret and undiscern'd; but God the highest Spirit offers himself to us in his Son, in his Ordinances, is visible in every Creature, presents himself to us in every providence; to him we must seek; in him we must rest. God had no rest from the Creation, till he had made Man; and Man can have no rest in the Creation, till he rests in God. God only is *our dwelling place*; our Souls should *only long for him*; our Souls should only wait upon him. The Spirit of Man never riseth to its original glory, till it be carried up on the wings of Faith and Love to its original Copy. The face of the Soul looks most beautiful, when it is turned to the face of God the Father of Spirits; when the derived Spirit is fixed upon the original Spirit, drawing from it Life and Glory. Spirit is only the receptacle of Spirit. God as Spirit is our Principle; we must therefore live upon him. God as Spirit, hath some resemblance to us as his Image; we must therefore only satisfy our selves in him.

\* Psal. 90. 1.

\* Psal. 63. 1.

9. Inference. If God be a Spirit, *we should take most care of that wherein we are like to God*. Spirit is nobler than Body; we must therefore value our Spirits above our Bodies: The Soul as Spirit, partakes more of the Divine Nature, and deserves more of our choicest cares. If we have any love to this Spirit, we should have a real affection to our own Spirits, as bearing a stamp of the spiritual Divinity, the chiefest of all the works of God; as it is said of *Behemoth*, *Job. 40. 19.* . That which is most the Image of this immense Spirit, should be our *Darling*: So *David* calls his *Soul*, *Psal. 35. 17.* Shall we take care of that wherein we partake not of God, and not delight in the Jewel which hath his own Signature upon it? God was not only the Framer of Spirits, and the End of Spirits; but the Copy and Exemplar of Spirits. God partakes of no corporeity, he is pure Spirit. But how do we act, as if we were only matter and body! We have but little kindness for this great Spirit as well as our own, if we take no care of his immediate offspring, since he is not only Spirit, but the Father of Spirits.\*

\* Heb. 12. 9.

\* 2 Cor. 7. 1.

10. Inference. If God be a Spirit, *let us take heed of those sins which are spiritual*. *Paul* distinguisheth between the filth of the *Flesh*, and that of the *Spirit*\*: By the one we defile the Body; by the other we defile the Spirit, which in regard of its Nature is of kin to the Creator. To wrong one who is neer of kin to a Prince, is worse than to injure an inferior Subject. When we make our Spirits, which are most like to God in their Nature, and framed according to his Image, a stage to act vain imaginations, wicked desires, and unclean affections, we wrong God in the excellency of his Work, and reflect upon the nobleness of the Patern; we wrong him in that part where he hath stamp't the most signal Character of his own spiritual nature; we defile that whereby we have only converse with him as a Spirit, which he hath ordered more immediately to represent him in this Nature, than all corporeal things in the world can, and make that Spirit with whom we desire to be joyned, unfit for such a knot. Gods Spirituality is the root of his other perfections. We have already heard, he could not be *infinite, omnipresent, immutable* without it. Spiritual sins are the greatest root of bitterness within us: As grace in our Spirits renders us more like to a spiritual God; so spiritual *sins* bring us into a conformity to a degraded Devil.\* Carnal sins change us from men to brutes, and spiritual sins debase us of the Image of God for the Image of *Satan*. We should by no means make our Spirits a Dung-hill, which bear upon them the Character of the spiritual Nature of God, and were made for his residence: Let us therefore behave our selves towards God in all those ways which the spiritual nature of God requires us.

\* Eph. 2. 2, 3.



A  
DISCOURSE  
OF  
Spiritual Worship.

**H**AVING thus dispatcht the first proposition, *God is a Spirit*; It will not be amiss to handle the inference our Saviour makes from that proposition, which is the second observation propounded.  
Doct. That *the Worship due from us to God ought to be Spiritual and Spiritually performed.*

*Spirit and Truth* are understood variously. Either we are to Worship God,

1. *Not by legal ceremonies.* The Evangelical administration, being called *Spirit* in opposition to the legal ordinances as carnal; and *Truth* in opposition to them as typical. As the whole *Judaical* service is called *flesh*; so the whole *Evangelical* service is called *Spirit*. Or *Spirit* may be opposed to the worship at *Jerusalem*, as it was *carnal*; *Truth*, to the worship on the Mount *Gerizim*, because it was *false*. They had not the true object of worship, nor the true Medium of worship as those at *Jerusalem* had. Their worship should cease, because it was *false*; and the *Jewish* worship should cease, because it was *carnal*.

There is no need of a Candle, when the Sun spreads its beams in the Air; no need of those Ceremonies, when the Sun of righteousness appeared: They only served for Candles to instruct and direct men till the time of his coming. The shadows are chased away by the displaying the substance, so that they can be of no more use in the worship of God, since the end for which they were instituted, is expired; and that discovered to us in the Gospel which the *Jews* sought for in vain, among the baggage and stuff of their Ceremonies.

2. *With a Spiritual and sincere frame.* In *Spirit*, i. e. with Spirit; with the inward operations of all the faculties of our Souls, and the cream and flower of them: And the reason is, because there ought to be a worship suitable to the nature of God. And as the worship was to be Spiritual, so the exercise of that worship ought to be in a Spiritual manner. \* It shall be a worship in *Truth*, because the true God shall be adored without those vain imaginations, and phantastick resemblances of him, which were common among the blind *Gentiles*, and contrary to the glorious nature of God, and unworthy ingredients in Religious services. It shall be a worship in *spirit*, without those carnal rites the degenerate *Jews* rested on: Such a posture of Soul which is the life and ornament of every service God looks for at your hands: There must be some proportion between the object adored and the manner in which we adore it. It must not be a meer Corporeal worship, because God is not a body; but it must rise from the Center of our Soul, because God is a Spirit. If he were a body, a bodily worship might suite him, Images might be fit to represent him; but being a Spirit, our bodily services enter us not into communion with him. Being a Spirit we must banish from our minds all carnal imaginations of him, and separate from our Wills all cold and dissembled affection to him. We must not only have a loud voice, but an elevated Soul; not only a bended knee, but a broken heart; not only a supplicating tone, but a groaning Spirit; not only a ready ear for the word, but a receiving heart; and this shall be of greater value with him, than

\* Legend.

Tom. 2. p. 777.

\* Taylors Exemplar Preface § 30.



the most costly outward services offered at *Gerizim* or *Jerusalem*.

Our *Saviour* certainly meant not by worshipping in Spirit, only the matter of the Evangelical service, as opposed to the legal administration, without the manner wherein it was to be performed. 'Tis true, God always sought a worship in Spirit; he expected the heart of the worshipper should joyn with his instituted rights of adoration in every exercise of them: But he expects such a carriage more under the Gospel administration, because of the clearer discoveries of his nature made in it, and the greater assistances conveyed by it.

I shall therefore,

1. Lay down some general propositions.
2. Shew what this Spiritual worship is.
3. Why we must offer to God a Spiritual service.
4. The Use.

1. Some general propositions.

Proposition, 1. First. *The right exercise of worship is founded upon and riseth from the Spirituality of God.* \*

The first ground of the worship we render to God, is the infinite excellency of his nature, which is not only one attribute, but results from all: For God, as God, is the object of worship; and the Notion of God consists not in thinking him wise, good, just, but all those infinitely beyond any Conception. And hence it follows that God is an object infinitely to be loved and honoured. His goodness is sometimes spoken of in Scripture as a motive of our homage. *Plat. 130.* 4. *There is forgiveness with thee that thou maist be feared.* Fear in the Scripture dialect signifies the whole worship of God. *Acts 10. 35.* But in every Nation he that fears him is accepted of him. \* If God should act towards men according to the rigors of his Justice due to them for the least of their Crimes, there could be no exercise of any affection but that of despair, which could not engender a worship of God which ought to be joyned with love, not with hatred. The beneficence and patience of God and his readiness to pardon men is the reason of the honour they return to him. And this is so evident a motive, that generally the Idolatrous world rankt those Creatures in the number of their Gods, which they perceived useful and beneficial to man-kind; as the *Sun* and *Moon*; the *A Egyptians* the *Ox*, &c. And the more beneficial any thing appeared to mankind, the higher station men gave it in the rank of their deities, and bestowed a more peculiar and solemn worship upon it. Men worshipped God to procure or continue his favour, which would not have been acted by them, had they not conceived it a pleasing thing to him to be merciful and gracious.

Sometimes his Justice is proposed to us as a motive of worship, *Heb. 12. 28, 29.* *serve God with Reverence and Godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire*; which includes his holiness, whereby he doth hate sin, as well as his wrath, whereby he doth punish it. Who but a mad and totally brutish person, or one that was resolved to make war against heaven, could behold the effects of Gods anger in the world, consider him in his Justice as a *consuming fire*, and despise him, and rather be drawn out by that consideration to blasphemy and despair, than to seek all ways to appease him? Now tho the infinite power of God, his unspeakable wisdom, his incomprehensible goodness, the holiness of his nature, the vigilance of his Providence, the bounty of his hand signifie to man, that he should love and honour him, and are the motives of worship; yet the Spirituality of his nature is the rule of worship, and directs us to render our duty to him with all the powers of our Soul. As his goodness beams out upon us, worship is due in Justice to him; and as he is the most excellent nature, veneration is due to him in the highest manner with the choicest affections.

So that indeed the Spirituality of God comes chiefly into consideration in matter of worship: All his perfections are grounded upon this: He could not be infinite, immutable, omniscient if he were a Corporeal being: \* We cannot give him a worship unless we Judge him worthy, excellent and deserving a worship at our hands: And we cannot Judge him worthy of a worship, unless we have some apprehensions and admirations of his infinite virtues: And we cannot apprehend and admire those perfections, but as we see them as causes shining in their effects. When we see therefore the frame of the world to be the work of his power; the order of the

\* Ames medul.  
1b. 2. cap. 4.  
§ 20.

\* So 2 Kings  
17. 32, 33.

\* Amiraldis  
ser. 6. disp. 1.  
pt. 11.



the world to be the fruit of his wisdom, and the usefulness of the world to be the product of his goodness: We find the motives and reasons of worship; and weighing that this power, wisdom, goodness, infinitely transcend any corporeal nature; we find a rule of worship, that it ought to be offered by us in a manner suitable to such a nature, as is infinitely above any bodily Being. His being a Spirit declares what he is, his other perfections declare what kind of Spirit he is. All Gods perfections suppose him a Spirit; all center in this: His wisdom doth not suppose him merciful, or his mercy suppose him omniscient: There may be distinct notions of those, but all suppose him to be of a spiritual nature. How cold and frozen will our devotions be, if we consider not his omniscience, whereby he discerns our hearts? How carnal will our services be, if we consider him not as a pure Spirit? \* In our offers to, and transactions with men, we deal not with them as meer Animals, but as rational Creatures; and we debase their natures if we treat them otherwise: And if we have not raised apprehensions of Gods spiritual nature in our treating with him, but allow him only such frames as we think fit enough for men; we debase his spirituality to the littleness of our own Being: We must therefore possess our Souls with this, we shall else render him no better than a fleshly service. We do not much concern ourselves in those things, of which we are either utterly ignorant, or have but slight apprehensions of.

\* *Amicus de Relig.*

That is the first Proposition; The right exercise of worship is grounded upon the spirituality of God.

Propos. 2. *This spiritual worship of God is manifest by the light of Nature, to be due to him.* In reference to this, consider,

1. *The outward means or matter of that worship which would be acceptable to God, was not known by the light of Nature.* The Law for a Worship, and for a spiritual worship, by the faculties of our Souls was natural, and part of the Law of Creation; though the determination of the particular acts, whereby God would have this homage testified, was of positive institution, and depended not upon the Law of Creation. Though *Adam* in Innocence knew God was to be worshipped; yet by Nature he did not know by what outward acts he was to pay this respect, or at what time he was more solemnly to be exercised in it than at another: This depended upon the directions God as the sovereign Governour and Law-giver should prescribe. You therefore find the positive institutions of the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, and the determination of the time of worship, *Gen. 2. 3. 17.* Had there been any such notion in *Adam* naturally, as strong as that other, that a worship was due to God, there would have been found some reliques of these modes universally consented to by Mankind, as well as of the other: But though all Nations have by an universal consent concurred in the acknowledgment of the Being of God, and his right to adoration, and the obligation of the Creature to it; and that there ought to be some publick rule and polity, in matters of Religion; (for no Nation hath been in the world without a worship, and without external acts and certain ceremonies to signify that worship) yet their modes and rites have been as various as their climates, unless in that common notion of sacrifices, not descending to them by nature, but tradition from *Adam*; and the various ways of worship have been more provoking than pleasing: Every Nation suited the kind of worship to their particular ends and polities they designed to rule by. How God was, to be worshipped, is more difficult to be discerned by Nature with its eyes out, than with its eyes clear.

\* The pillars upon which the worship of God stands, cannot be discerned without revelation, no more than blind *Sampson* could tell where the pillars of the *Philistines Theatre* stood, without one to conduct him. What *Adam* could not see with his sound eyes, we cannot with our dim eyes; He must be told from Heaven, what worship was fit for the God of Heaven. 'Tis not by Nature that we can have such a full prospect of God as may content and quiet us; This is the noble effect of Divine Revelation; He only knows himself, and can only make himself known to us. It could not be supposed, that an infinite God should have no perfections but what were visible in the works of his hands; and that these perfections should not be infinitely greater, than as they were sensible in their present effects: This had been to apprehend God a limited Being, meaner than he is. Now 'tis impossible to honour God as we ought, unless we know him as he is; and we could not know him as he is, with-

\* *King on Job. nab. P. 63.*



out divine revelation from himself; for none but God can acquaint us with his own nature: And therefore the nations void of this conduct, heapt up modes of worship from their own imaginations, unworthy of the Majesty of God, and below the nature of man: A rational man would scarce have owned such for signs of honour, as the Scripture mentions in the services of *Baal* and *Dagon*. Much less an infinitely wise and glorious God: And when God had signified his mind to his own people, how unwilling were they to rest satisfied with Gods determination, but would be warping to their own inventions, and make Gods, and wayes of worship to themselves? \* As in the matter of the *Golden Calf*, as was lately spoken of.

\* Amos 5. 26.

2. *Tho the outward manner of worship acceptable to God, could not be known without revelation, and those revelations might be various; yet the inward manner of worship with our Spirits was manifest by nature.* And not only manifest by nature to *Adam* in Innocence, but after his fall, and the scales he had brought upon his understanding by that fall. When God gave him his positive institutions before the fall, or whatsoever additions God should have made, had he persisted in that state; or when he appointed him after his fall to testify his acknowledgment of him by Sacrifices, there needed no Command to him to make those acknowledgments by those outward wayes prescribed to him, with the intention and prime affection of his Spirit: This nature would instruct him in without revelation: For he could not possibly have any semblance of reason to think, that the offering of beasts, or the presenting the first fruits of the increase of the ground, as an acknowledgment of Gods Sovereignty over him and his bounty to him, was sufficient without devoting to him that part wherein the *Image* of his Creator did consist: He could not but discern by a reflection upon his own being, that he was made for God as well as by God: [For it is a natural principle, of which the *Apostle* speaks, Rom. 11. 36. *For of him and through him and to him are all things, &c.*] That the whole, whereof he did consist was due to God; and that his Body, the dreggy and dusty part of his nature, was not fit to be brought alone before God, without that nobler principle, which he had by Creation linkt with it. Nothing in the whole law of nature, as it is informed of Religion, was clearer next to the being of God, than this manner of worshipping God with the mind and Spirit. And as the *Gentiles* never sunk so low into the mud of Idolatry, as to think the Images they worshipped were really their Gods, but the representations, or habitations of their Gods; so they never deserted this principle in the Notion of it, that God was to be honoured with the best they were, and the best they had: As they never denied the being of a God in the Notion, tho they did in the practise; so they never rejected this principle in Notion, tho they did, and now most men do, in the inward observation of it: It was a maxime among them that God was *mens, animus*, mind and Spirit, and therefore was to be honoured with the mind and Spirit: That religion did not consist in the Ceremonies of the body, but the work of the Soul; Whence, the speech of one of them; \* *Sacrifice to the Gods not so much clothed with purple garments as a pure heart*: And of another. *God regards not the multitude of the Sacrifices, but the disposition of the Sacrificer.* Tis not fit we should deny God the Cream and Flower, and give him the flotten part and the stalks. And with what Reverence and intention of mind they thought their worship was to be performed, is evident by the Priests crying out often, *hoc age*, Mind this, let your Spirits be intent upon it.

\* Menander.  
Grot. de veritat  
relig. lib. 4. §

12.  
\* Jamblick

This could not but result

(1.) *From the knowledge of our selves.* Tis a natural principle, *God hath made us and not we our selves*, Psal. 100. 1, 2. Man knows himself to be a rational Creature: As a Creature he was to serve his Creator, and as a rational Creature with the best part of that rational nature he derived from him. By the same act of reason that he knows himself to be a Creature, he knows himself to have a Creator: That this Creator is more excellent than himself, and that an honour is due from him to the Creator for framing of him; and therefore this honour was to be offered to him by the most excellent part which was framed by him. Man cannot consider himself as a thinking, understanding being; but he must know that he must give God the honour of his thoughts, and worship him with those faculties whereby he Thinks, Wills, and Acts. \* He must know his faculties were given him to act, and to act for the glory of that God who gave him his Soul and the faculties of it; and he could

\* Amirauc.  
Mor. Tom. 1.  
pa. 309. 310.



could not in reason think they must be only active in his own service, and the service of the Creature, and idle and unprofitable in the service of his Creator. With the same Powers of our Soul whereby we contemplate God, we must also worship God: We cannot think of him but with our Minds, nor love him but with our Will; and we cannot worship him without the acts of thinking and loving, and therefore cannot worship him without the exercise of our inward faculties: How is it possible then for any man that knows his own nature, to think that extended hands, bended knees and lifted up eyes were sufficient acts of worship, without a quickened and active Spirit?

(2) *From the knowledge of God.* As there was a knowledge of God by nature, so the same nature did dictate to Man that God was to be glorified as God: The *Apostle* implies the inference in the charge he brings against them for neglecting it. *We should speak of God as he is*, said one\*; and the same reason would inform them that they were to act towards God as he is. The excellency of the Object required a worship according to the dignity of his Nature; which could not be answered but by the most serious inward affection, as well as outward decency; and a want of this, cannot but be judged to be unbecoming the Majesty of the Creator of the world, and the excellency of Religion. No Nation, no person did ever assert, that the vilest part of man was enough for the most excellent Being, as God is: That a bodily service could be a sufficient acknowledgment of the greatness of God, or a sufficient return for the bounty of God. \* Man could not but know that he was to act in Religion, conformably to the Object of Religion, and to the excellency of his own Soul: The notion of a God was sufficient to fill the mind of man with admiration and reverence, and the first conclusion from it would be to honour God, and that he have all the affection placed on him, that so infinite and spiritual a Being did deserve: The progress then would be, that this excellent Being was to be honoured with the motions of the Understanding and Will; with the purest and most spiritual powers in the nature of man; because he was a spiritual Being, and had nothing of matter mingled with him. Such a brutish imagination, to suppose that blood and fumes, beasts and incense could please a Deity without a spiritual frame, cannot be supposed to befall any but those that had lost their reason in the rubbish of sense. Meer rational nature could never conclude, that so excellent a Spirit would be put off with a meer animal service; an attendance of matter and body without Spirit, when they themselves of an inferior nature, would be loath to sit down contented with an outside service from those that belong to them: So that this instruction of our Saviour, that God is to be worshipped in Spirit and Truth, is conformable to the sentiments of nature, and drawn from the most undeniable principles of it. The excellency of Gods nature, and the excellent constitution of human faculties, concur naturally to support this persuasion: This was as natural to be known by men, as the necessity of Justice and Temperance for the support of human societies and bodies. 'Tis to be feared that if there be not among us such brutish apprehensions, there are such brutish dealings with God in our services against the light of nature; when we place all our worship of God in outward attendances and drooping countenances, with unbelieving frames and formal devotions; when Prayer is muttered over in private slightly, as a Parrot learns lessons by rote, not understanding what it speaks, or to what end it speaks it; not glorifying God in Thought and Spirit, with Understanding and Will.

3. *Spiritual Worship therefore was always required by God, and always offered to him by one or other.* Man had a perpetual obligation upon him to such a worship from the nature of God, and what is founded upon the nature of God is unvariable. This and that particular mode of worship may *wax old as a Garment*, and as a *Vesture may be folded up and changed*, as the expression is of the Heavens\*: But God endures for ever; his spirituality fails not, therefore a worship of him in Spirit must run through all ways and rites of Worship. God must cease to be Spirit, before any service but that which is spiritual, can be accepted by him. The light of Nature is the light of God; the light of nature being unchangeable, what was dictated by that, was alway and will alway be required by God. The worship of God being perpetually due from the Creature, the worshipping him as God is as perpetually his right. Though the outward expressions of this Honour were different, one way

Rom. i. 21.

\* Elias.

\* Amyraut B.

\* Heb. i. 11, 12.



in Paradise (for a worship was then due, since a solemn time for that worship was appointed) another under the Law, another under the Gospel; the *Angels* also worship God in Heaven, and fall down before his Throne; yet though they differ in rites, they agree in this necessary ingredient: All rites though of a different shape, must be offered to him, not as Carcasses, but animated with the affections of the Soul. *Abels Sacrifice* had not been so excellent in Gods esteem, without those gracious habits and affections working in his Soul\*. Faith works by Love; his heart was on fire as well as his Sacrifice. *Cain* rested upon his Present, perhaps thought he had obliged God; he depended upon the outward Ceremony, but sought not for the inward purity: It was an offering brought to the Lord; he had the right object but not the right manner, *Gen. 4. 7.* *If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?* And in the Command afterwards to *Abraham*, *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*, was the direction in all our religious acts and walkings with God. A sincere act of the Mind and Will, looking above and beyond all Symbols; extending the Soul to a pitch far above the Body, and seeing the day of Christ through the vail of the Ceremonies, was required by God: And though *Moses* by Gods order had instituted a multitude of carnal Ordinances, Sacrifices, Washings, Oblations of sensible things, and recommended to the people the diligent observation of those Statutes by the allurements of promises, and denouncing of threatnings; as if there were nothing else to be regarded, and the true workings of Grace were to be buried under a heap of Ceremonies; yet sometimes he doth point them to the inward worship, and by the Command of God, requires of them the *Circumcision of the Heart*, *Deut. 10. 16.* the turning to God with *all their heart, and all their Soul*, *Deut. 30. 10.* whereby they might recollect, that it was the engagement of the Heart, and the worship of the Spirit that was most agreeable to God; and that he took not any pleasure in their observance of Ceremonies, without true Piety within, and the true purity of their thoughts.

4. *'Tis therefore as much every mans duty to worship God in Spirit, as it is their duty to worship him.* Worship is so due to him as God, as that he that denies it, disowns his Deity: And spiritual worship is so due, that he that waves it denies his spirituality. 'Tis a debt of Justice we owe to God to worship him, and it is as much a debt of Justice to worship him according to his Nature. Worship is nothing else but a rendering to God the honour that is due to him; and therefore the right posture of our Spirits in it, is as much or more due, than the material worship in the modes of his own prescribing; that is grounded both upon his Nature, and upon his Command; this only upon his Command; that is perpetually due, whereas the Channel wherein outward worship runs may be dried up, and the River diverted another way: Such a worship wherein the mind thinks of God, feels a sense of God, has the Spirit consecrated to God, the Heart glowing with affections to God: 'Tis else a mocking God with a feather. A rational Nature must worship God with that wherein the Glory of God doth most sparkle in him. God is most visible in the frame of the Soul, 'tis there his Image glitters: He hath given us a Jewel as well as a Case, and the Jewel as well as the Case we must return to him: The Spirit is Gods gift, and must return to him\*: It must return to him in every service morally, as well as it must return to him at last physically. 'Tis not fit we should serve our Maker only with that which is the Brute in us, and withhold from him that which doth constitute us reasonable Creatures; we must give him our bodies, but a *living Sacrifice*\*. If the Spirit be absent from God when the Body is before him, we present a dead Sacrifice; 'Tis morally dead in the duty, though it be naturally alive in the posture and action. 'Tis not an indifferent thing whether we shall worship God or no, nor is it an indifferent thing whether we shall worship him without Spirits or no: As the excellency of mans knowledge consists in knowing things as they are in Truth; so the excellency of the Will in willing things as they are in goodness. As it is the excellency of Man to know God as God; so it is no less his excellency, as well as his duty, to honour God as God. As the obligation we have to the Power of God for our Being, binds us to a worship of him; so the obligation we have to his bounty for fashioning us according to his own Image, binds us to an exercise of that part wherein his Image doth consist. God hath *made all things for himself*, *Pro. 16. 4.* that is, for the evidence of his own goodness and wisdom: We are therefore to render him

\* Heb. 11. 4.

\* Gen. 4. 5.

\* Eccl. 12. 7.

\* Rom. 12. 1.



a glory according to the excellency of his nature, discovered in the frame of our own. 'Tis as much our sin not to glorify God as God, as not to attempt the glorifying of him at all: 'Tis our sin not to worship God as God, as well as to omit the testifying any respect at all to him. As the divine nature is the object of worship, so the Divine perfections are to be honoured in worship: We do not honour God if we honour him not as he is; we honour him not as a Spirit, if we think him not worthy of the ardors and ravishing admirations of our Spirits. If we think the Devotions of the body are sufficient for him, we contract him into the condition of our own being; and not only deny him to be a Spiritual nature, but dash out all those perfections which he could not be possessed of, were he not a Spirit.

5. *The Ceremonial law was abolished to promote the Spirituality of Divine worship.* That service was gross, carnal, calculated for an infant and sensitive Church: It consisted in rudiments, the Circumcision of the flesh, the blood and smoke of Sacrifices, the steams of incense, observation of days, distinction of meats, Corporal purifications; every leaf of the law is clogged with some rite to be particularly observed by them: The Spirituality of worship lay veiled under a thick cloud, that the people could not behold the glory of the Gospel, which lay covered under those shadows, 2 Cor. 3. 13. *They could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:* They understood not the Glory and Spiritual intent of the law, and therefore came short of that Spiritual frame in the worship of God, which was their duty. And therefore in opposition to this administration, the worship of God under the Gospel is called by our Saviour in the Text, *a worship in Spirit*; more Spiritual for the matter, more Spiritual for the motives, and more Spiritual for the manner and frames of worship.

(1.) *This legal service is called flesh in Scripture, in opposition to the Gospel which is called Spirit.* The ordinances of the Law, tho of Divine institution, are dignified by the Apostle with no better a title than *Carnal ordinances*, \* and a *Carnal Command*: \* But the Gospel is called *the Ministration of the Spirit*, as being attended with a special and Spiritual efficacy on the minds of men. \* And when the degenerate *Galatians*, after having tasted of the pure streams of the Gospel, turned about to drink of the thicker streams of the Law, the Apostle tells them, that they begun *in the Spirit* and would now be *made perfect in the flesh*. \* They would leave the righteousness of faith for a justification by works. The moral law which is in its own nature *Spiritual*, \* in regard of the abuse of it, in expectation of justification by the outward works of it, is called *flesh*: Much more may the Ceremonial administration, which was never intended to run parallel with the moral, nor had any foundation in nature as the other had.

\* Heb. 9. 10.

\* Heb. 7. 16.

\* 2 Cor. 3. 8.

\* Gal. 3. 3.

\* Rom. 7. 14.

That whole Oeconomy consisted in sensible and material things which only touched the flesh; 'Tis called *the letter* and the *oldness of the Letter*; \* as Letters which are but empty sounds of themselves, but put together and formed into words, signify something to the mind of the hearer or reader: An old Letter, a thing of no efficacy upon the Spirit, but as a law written upon paper. The Gospel hath an efficacious Spirit attending it strongly working upon the mind and Will; and moulding the Soul into a Spiritual frame for God, according to the Doctrine of the Gospel; the one is old and decays, the other is new and increaseth daily.

\* Rom. 7. 6.

And as the law it self is called *flesh*, so the observers of it and resters in it are called *Israel after the flesh*, \* And the Evangelical worshipper is called a *Jew after the Spirit*. Rom. 2. 29. They were *Israel after the flesh* as born of *Jacob*, not *Israel after the Spirit as born of God*; and therefore the Apostle calls them *Israel* and not *Israel*. \* *Israel after a carnal birth, not Israel after a Spiritual: Israel in the Circumcision of the flesh, not Israel by a regeneration of the heart.*

\* Rom. 9. 6.

(2.) *The legal Ceremonies were not a fit means to bring the heart into a Spiritual frame.* They had a Spiritual intent; the *Rock* and *Manna* prefigured the Salvation and Spiritual nourishment by the Redeemer. The Sacrifices were to point them to the Justice of God in the punishment of sin, and the mercy of God in substituting them in their steads, as types of the Redeemer and the ransom by his blood. The Circumcision of the flesh was to instruct them in the Circumcision of the heart: They were flesh in regard of their matter, weakness and cloudiness: Spiritual in regard of their intent and signification: They did instruct, but not efficaciously

\* 1 Cor. 10. 18.

\* 1 Cor. 10. 3. 4.



ciously work strong Spiritual affections in the Soul of the worshipper. They were *weak* and *leggerly elements*; \* had neither wealth to enrich nor strength to nourish the Soul: They could not *perfect* the Comers to them, or put them into a frame agreeable to the nature of God, \* nor *purge the Conscience from those dead and dull dispositions* which were by nature in them: \* Being Carnal they could not have an efficacy to purifie the Conscience of the offerer and work Spiritual effects: Had they continued without the exhibition of Christ, they could never have wrought any *change* in us or purchased any *favour* for us. \* At the best they were but shadows, and came unexpressibly short of the efficacy of that person and state whose shadows they were. The shadow of a man is too weak to perform what the man himself can do, because it wants the life, Spirit and activity of the substance: The whole pomp and scene was suited more to the sensitive than the intellectual nature; and like pictures pleased the fancy of Children, rather than improved their reason. The *Jewish* state, was a state of *Child-hood*, \* and that administration a *Pedagogy*. \* The Law was a Schoolmaster fitted for their weak and Childish Capacity, and could no more Spiritualize the heart, than the teachings in a Primer-School can enable the mind, and make it fit for affairs of State: And because they could not better the Spirit, they were instituted only for a time, as elements delivered to an infant age, which naturally lives a life of sense, rather than a life of reason. It was also a servile state, which doth rather debase than elevate the mind; rather Carnalize than Spiritualize the heart: Besides, 'tis a sense of mercy that both melts and elevates the heart into a Spiritual frame: \* *There is forgiveness with thee that thou maist be feared*: And they had in that state but some glimmerings of mercy in the daily bloody intimations of Justice: There was no Sacrifice for some sins, but a cutting off without the least hints of pardon; and in the yearly remembrance of sin, there was as much to shiver them with fear, as to possess than with hopes: And such a state which alwayes held them under the Conscience of sin, could not produce a free Spirit, which was necessary for a worship of God according to his nature.

(3.) *In their use they rather hindred than furthered a Spiritual worship.* In their own nature they did not tend to the obstructing a Spiritual worship; for then they had been contrary to the nature of Religion, and the end of God who appointed them: Nor did God cover the Evangelical Doctrine under the clouds of the legal administration, to hinder the people of *Israel* from perceiving it; but because they were not yet capable to bear the splendor of it, had it been clearly set before them. The shining of the face of *Moses* was too dazzling for their weak eyes, and therefore there was a necessity of a *veil*, not for the things themselves, but the *weakness of their eyes*. \* The carnal affections of that people sunk down into the things themselves; stuck in the outward pomp, and pierced not through the vail to the Spiritual intent of them. And by the use of them without rational conceptions they besotted their minds and became senseless of those Spiritual motions required of them. Hence came all their expectations of a *Carnal Messiah*; the veil of Ceremonies was so thick and the film upon their eyes so condensed, that they could not look through the veil to the Spirit of Christ. They beheld not the Heavenly *Canaan* for the beauty of the earthly, nor minded the regeneration of the Spirit, while they rested upon the purifications of the flesh: The prevalency of sense and sensitive affections diverted their minds from enquiring into the intent of them. Sense and matter are often cloggs to the mind, and sensible objects are the same often to Spiritual motions. Our Souls are never more raised, than when they are abstracted from the entanglements of them. A pompous worship made up of many sensible objects, weakens the Spirituality of Religion: Those that are most zealous for outward, are usually most cold and indifferent in inward observances: And those that overdo in carnal modes, usually underdo in Spiritual affections.

This was the *Jewish* state. \* The nature of the Ceremonies being pompous and earthly by their show and beauty, meeting with their weakness and Childish affections, filled their eyes with an outward lustre; allured their minds, and detained them from seeking things higher and more Spiritual: The kernel of those rites lay concealed in a thick shell, the Spiritual glory was little seen, and the Spiritual sweetness little tasted: Unless the *Scripture* be diligently searched, it seems to transfer the worship of God from true faith and the Spiritual motions of the heart, and stake it down

\* Gal. 4. 9.

\* Heb. 10. 1.

Heb. 9. 9.

\* Heb. 9. 14.

\* Burges 1<sup>st</sup> d.

Ja. 2. 50.

\* Gal. 4. 2.

\* Gal. 4. 24.

\* Ps. 130. 4.

\* 2 Cor. 5. 13.  
14.\* Ill. ric. de  
velan. Mofe  
Ja. 221. Co.



down to outward observances, and the *opus operatum*. Besides, the voice of the Law did only declare Sacrifices, and invited the Worshipper to them, with a promise of the atonement of Sin, turning away the wrath of God: It never plainly acquainted them, that those things were Types and Shadows of something future, that they were only outward purifications of the Flesh: It never plainly told them at the time of appointing them, that those Sacrifices could not abolish Sin, and reconcile them to God. Indeed we see more of them since their death and dissection, in that one Epistle to the *Hebrews*, than can be discern'd in the *five Books* of *Moses*: Besides, Man naturally affects a carnal Life, and therefore affects a carnal Worship; He designs the gratifying his sense, and would have a Religion of the same nature. Most men have no mind to busie their reasons about the things of sense, and are naturally unwilling to raise them up to those things which are allyed to the spiritual nature of God; and therefore the more spiritual any Ordinance is, the more averse is the heart of man to it. There is a *simplicity of the Gospel* from which our minds are easily corrupted by things that pleasure the sense, as *Eve* was by the curiolity of her eye, and the liquorishness of her Palate\*. From this Principle hath sprung all the Idolatry in the world. The Jews knew they had a God who had delivered them, but they would have a sensible God to go before them\*: And the Papacy at this day, is a Witness of the truth of this natural Corruption.

4. Upon these accounts therefore God never testified himself well pleased with that kind of Worship. He was not displeased with them as they were his own institution, and ordained for the representing (though in an obscure manner) the glorious things of the Gospel; nor was he offended with those peoples observance of them: For since he had commanded them, it was their duty to perform them, and their sin to neglect them: But he was displeased with them as they were practised by them, with Souls as morally carnal in the practises, as the Ceremonies were materially carnal in their substance. It was not their disobedience to observe them; but it was a disobedience, and a contempt of the end of the institution to rest upon them; to be warm in them, and cold in morals: They fed upon the Bone, and neglected the Marrow; pleased themselves with the Shell, and sought not for the Kernel: They joyned not with them the internal Worship of God, Fear of him, with Faith in the promised Seed, which lay veild under those Coverings, *Hos. 6. 6. I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice; and the Knowledge of God, more than burnt Offerings*: And therefore he seems sometimes weary of his own institutions, and calls them not his own, but *their* Sacrifices, *their* Feasts, *Isa. 1. 11, 14*. They were *his* by appointment, *theirs* by abuse: The Institution was from his goodness and condescension, therefore *his*; the corruption of them was from the vice of their Nature; therefore *theirs*. He often blamed them for their carnality in them; shew'd his dislike of placing all their Religion in them; gives the Sacrificers upon that account, no better a title, than that of the Princes of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*\*: And compares the Sacrifices themselves to the cutting off a Dog's Neck, Swines Blood, and the Murder of a Man\*. And indeed God never valued them, or exprest any delight in them: He despised the Feasts of the Wicked, *Amos 5. 21*. and had no esteem for the material Offerings of the Godly, *Psal. 50. 13. Will I eat the flesh of Bulls, or drink the blood of Goats?* which he speaks to his Saints and People, before he comes to reprove the Wicked; which he begins v. 16. *But to the Wicked, God said, &c.* So slightly he esteemed them, that he seems to disown them to be any part of his Command when he brought his People out of the Land of *Egypt*, *Jer. 7. 21. I spake not to your Fathers, nor commanded them concerning burnt Offerings and Sacrifices*. He did not value and regard them, in comparison of that inward frame which he had required by the moral Law; that being given before the Law of Ceremonies, obliged them in the first place, to an observance of those Precepts. They seemed to be below the Nature of God, and could not of themselves please him. None could in reason perswade themselves, that the death of a Beast, was a proportionable Offering for the sin of a Man, or ever was intended for the expiation of Transgression. In the same rank are all our bodily services under the Gospel: A loud voice without Spirit; bended bulrushes without inward affections, are no more delightful to God, than the Sacrifices of Animals: 'Tis but a change of one Brute for another of a higher species; a meer Brute, for that part of man which hath an agree-

\* 2 Cor. 11. 3.

\* Exod. 32. 1.

\* Isa. 1. 10.

\* Isa. 65. 3.



ment with Brutes: Such a service is a meer animal service, and not spiritual.

5. *And therefore God never intended that sort of Worship to be durable, and had often mentioned the change of it for one more spiritual.* It was not good or evil in itself; whatsoever goodness it had, was solely deriv'd to it by institution, and therefore it was mutable: It had no conformity with the spiritual nature of God who was to be worshipped, nor with the rational nature of man who was to worship: And therefore he often speaks of taking away the *New-Moons*, and *Feasts*, and *Sacrifices* and all the ceremonial Worship, as things he took no pleasure in; to have a Worship more suited to his excellent Nature: But he never speaks of removing the Gospel Administration, and the worship prescribed there, as being more agreeable to the nature and perfections of God, and displaying them more illustriously to the World.

\* Heb. 7. 12. The *Apostle* tells us, it was to be *disannul'd because of its weakness*: A determinate time was fixed for its duration, till the accomplishment of the truth figured under that *Pedagogy*\*. Some of the modes of that worship being only typical, must naturally expire and be insignificant in their use, upon the finishing of that by the Redeemer, which they did prefigure: And other parts of it, though God suffered them so long because of the weakness of the Worshippinger; yet because it became not God to be always worshipped in that manner, he would reject them, and introduce another more spiritual and elevated. *Incense and a pure Offering* should be offered every where unto his Name.\*

\* Gal. 4. 2.

\* Mal. 1. 11.

\* Paschal. Pen. 142.

\* Isa. 43. 18. 19.

\* Jer. 3. 16.

\* Psal. 110.

\* He often told them he would make a *new Covenant* by the *Messiah*, and the old should be rejected; that the *former things should not be remembered, and the things of old no more considered*, when he should do a *new thing in the Earth*\*: Even the Ark of the Covenant, the Symbol of his presence, and the glory of the Lord in that Nation should not any more be remembered and visited\*; That the Temple and Sacrifices should be rejected, and others established; That the Order of the *Aaronical Priesthood* should be abolished, and that of *Melchisedeck* set up in the stead of it in the Person of the *Messiah* to endure for ever\*: That *Jerusalem* should be changed; a new Heaven and Earth created; a Worship more conformable to Heaven, more advantageous to Earth. God had proceeded in the removal of some parts of it, before the time of taking down the whole furniture of this house: The Pot of *Manna* was lost; *Urim* and *Thumim* ceased; the glory of the Temple was diminish'd; and the ignorant people wept at the sight of the one, without raising their Faith and Hope in the consideration of the other, which was promised to be filled with a spiritual glory. And as soon as ever the Gospel was spread in the World, God thundred out his judgments upon that place in which he had fixed all those legal Observances, so that the *Jews* in the Letter and Flesh, could never practise the main part of their worship, since they were expelled from that place where it was only to be celebrated. 'Tis one thousand six hundred years since they have been deprived of their *Altar*, which was the foundation of all the Levitical-worship, and have wandred in the world without a Sacrifice, a Prince or Priest, an Ephod or Teraphim.\*

\* Ho. 3. 4.

And God fully put an end to it in the Command he gave to the *Apostles*; and in them tous in the presence of *Moses* and *Elias*, to hear his Son only, *Matth. 17. 5. Behold a voice out of the Cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear him.* And at the death of our Saviour, testified it to that whole Nation and the World, by the rending in twain the vail of the Temple.

The whole frame of that service, which was carnal, and by reason of the corruption of Man, weakned, is nulled; and a spiritual worship is made known to the world, that we might now serve God in a more spiritual manner, and with more spiritual frames.

6. Proposition, *The Service and worship the Gospel settles, is spiritual, and the performance of it more spiritual.* Spirituality is the Genius of the Gospel, as Carnality was of the Law; the Gospel is therefore called *Spirit*: We are abstracted from the employments of Sense, and brought neerer to a Heavenly State. The *Jews* had Angels Bread poured upon them; we have Angels Service prescribed to us; the Praises of God; Communion with God in Spirit, through his Son *Jesus Christ*, and stronger foundations for spiritual affections. 'Tis called a *reasonable*



able service, \* tis suited to a rational nature, tho it finds no friendship from the Corruption of reason. It prescribes a service fit for the reasonable faculties of the Soul, and advanceth them while it employs them. The word *reasonable* may be translated, *word service*, \* as well as reasonable service; an Evangelical service in opposition to a Law service. All Evangelical service is reasonable, and all truly reasonable service is Evangelical. \* Rom. 12. 1.

\* V. Hammond  
in lx.

The *manner* of the worship is Spiritual; it consists in love of God, faith in God, recourse to his goodness, Meditation on him and Communion with him. It lays aside the Ceremonial, Spiritualizeth the moral: The Commands that concerned our duty to God, as well as those that concerned our duty to our Neighbour, were reduced by Christ to their Spiritual intention.

The *Motives* are Spiritual; tis a state of more *grace* as well as of more *truth*, \* supported by Spiritual promises, beaming out in Spiritual priviledges; heaven comes down in it to Earth, to Spiritualize Earth for Heaven. \* John 1. 17.

The *manner* of worship is more Spiritual; higher flights of the Soul, stronger ardours of affections, sincerer aims at his glory; mists are removed from our minds, Cloggs from the Soul, more of love than fear; faith in Christ kindles the affections and works by them.

The *assurances* to Spiritual worship are greater. The Spirit doth not drop, but is plentifully poured out. It doth not light sometimes upon, but dwells in the heart. Christ suited the Gospel to a Spiritual heart, and the Spirit changeth a carnal heart to make it fit for a Spiritual Gospel. He blows upon the Garden and causes the spices to flow forth. And often makes the Soul in worship like the Chariots of *Aminadab* in a quick and nimble motion: Our blessed Lord and Saviour by his death discovered to us the nature of God; and after his ascension sent his Spirit to fit us for the worship of God and converse with him.

One Spiritual Evangelical believing breath is more delightful to God, than millions of Altars made up of the richest pearls, and smoaking with the costliest oblations, because it is Spiritual: And a mite of Spirit is of more worth than the greatest weight of flesh. One holy Angel is more excellent than a whole world of meer bodies.

7. Proposition. *Yet the worship of God with our bodies is not to be rejected upon the account that God requires a Spiritual worship.* Tho we must perform the weightier duties of the Law, yet we are not to omit and leave undone the lighter precepts. Since both the *Magnalia* and *minutula legis*, the greater, and the lesser duties of the Law, have the stamp of Divine authority upon them.

As God under the Ceremonial Law did not Command the worship of the body, and the observation of outward rites without the engagement of the Spirit; so neither doth he Command that of the Spirit, without the peculiar attendance of the body.

The *Schwelk fendians* denied bodily worship. And the indecent postures of many in publick attendance, intimate no great care either of Composing their bodies or Spirits. A morally discomposed body intimates a tainted heart.

Our *Bodies* as well as our *Spirits* are to be presented to God. \* Our bodies in lieu of the Sacrifices of Beasts, as in the Judaical institutions; body for the whole man; a living Sacrifice, not to be slain, as the Beasts were, but living a new life, in a holy posture, with Crucified affections: This is the inference the Apostle makes of the priviledges of Justification, Adoption, Coheirship with Christ, which he had before discoursed of; Priviledges conferred upon the person and not upon a part of man. \* Rom. 12. 1.

1. *Bodily worship is due to God.* He hath a right to an Adoration by our bodies as they are his by Creation; his right is not diminished but increased by the blessing of Redemption, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *For you are bought with a price, therefore glorifie God in your bodies and your Spirits, which are Gods.* The Body as well as the Spirit is redeemed, since our Saviour suffered Crucifixion in his body, as well as Agonies in his Soul: Body is not taken here for the whole man, as it may be in *Rom. 12*. But for the material part of our nature, it being distinguished from the Spirit: If we are to render to God an obedience with our bodies, we are to render him such Acts of worship with our bodies, as they are capable of. As God is the Father of Spirits,



so he is the *God of all flesh*: Therefore the flesh he hath framed of the Earth, as well as the noble portion he hath breathed into us, cannot be denyed him without a palpable injustice: The service of the body we must not deny to God, unless we will deny him to be the author of it, and the exercise of his providential care about it. The mercies of God are renewed every day upon our bodies as well as our Souls, and therefore they ought to express a fealty to God for his bounty every day; [\* both are from God, both should be for God. Man consists of Body and Soul, the service of Man is the service of both. The body is to be Sanctified as well as the Soul, and therefore to be offered to God as well as the Soul. Both are to be glorified, both are to glorify: As our Saviours Divinity was manifested in his body, so should our Spirituality in ours. To give God the service of the body and not of the Soul, is hypocrisy; to give God the service of the Spirit and not of the body, is sacrilege; to give him neither, Atheism.] If the only part of man that is visible were exempted from the service of God, there could be no visible Testimonies of piety given upon any occasion: Since not a moiety of man, but the whole is Gods Creature, he ought to pay a homage with the whole and not only with a moiety of himself.

2. *Worship in societies is due to God, but this cannot be without some bodily expressions.* The law of nature doth as much direct men to combine together in publick societies for the acknowledgment of God, as in Civil Communities for self preservation and order. And the notice of a society for Religion is more Ancient than the mention of Civil associations for Politick Government, Gen. 4. 26. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord, viz. In the time of Seth.* No question but Adam had worshipped God before as well as Abel, and a Family-Religion had been preserved; but as mankind increased in distinct Families, they knit together in Companies to solemnize the worship of God. \* Hence as some think, those that incorporated together for such ends, were called the *Sons of God*: Sons by profession, tho not Sons by Adoption: As those of *Corinth* were Saints by profession, tho in such a Corrupted Church they could not be all so by regeneration; yet Saints, as being of a Christian society and calling upon the name of Christ, that is, worshipping God in Christ, tho they might not be all Saints in Spirit and Practise. So Cain and Abel met together to worship, Gen. 4. 3. *at the end of the days*, at a set time. God settled a publick worship among the *Jews*, instituted Synagogues for their Convening together, whence call'd the *Synagogues of God*. \* The Sabbath was instituted to acknowledge God a Common Benefactor. Publick worship keeps up the Memorials of God in a world prone to Atheism, and a sense of God in a heart prone to forgetfulness. The *Angels* sung in Company, not singly at the *Birth of Christ*, \* and praised God not only with a simple elevation of their Spiritual nature, but audibly by forming a voice in the air: Affections are more lively, Spirits more raised in publick than private; God will Credit his own ordinance. Fire increaseth by laying together many Coals on one place; so is devotion inflamed by the union of many hearts and by a joynt presence: Nor can the approach of the last day of Judgment, or particular Judgments upon a Nation give a Writ of ease from such assemblies. Heb. 10. 25. *Not forsaking the assembling our selves together, but so much the more as you see the day approaching*: Whether it be understood of the day of Judgment, or the day of the *Jewish* destruction and the Christian persecution, the *Apostle* uses it as an argument to quicken them to the observance, not to encourage them to a neglect. Since therefore natural light informs us, and Divine institution Commands us, publicly to acknowledge our selves the Servants of God, it implies the service of the body: Such acknowledgments cannot be without visible Testimonies, and outward exercises of devotion, as well as inward affections. This promotes Gods honour, checks others prophane, allures men to the same expressions of duty. And tho there may be hypocrisy and an outward garb without an inward frame; yet better a moiety of worship, than none at all; better acknowledge Gods right in one than disown it in both.

3. *Jesus Christ the most Spiritual worshipper worshipt God with his body.* He Prayed orally, and kneeled, *Father if it be thy Will, &c.* \* He blessed with his mouth, *Father I thank thee.* \* He lifted up his eyes as well as elevated his Spirit, when he praised his Father for mercy received, or begged for the blessings his Disciples wanted. \* The strength of the Spirit must have vent at the outward members.

The

\* Sherman's  
Greek in the  
Temple p. 61.  
62.

\* Stillingfleet's  
Irenicum cap.  
1. § 1. p. 23.

\* Psa. 74. 8.

\* Luke 2. 13.

\* Luke 22. 41,  
42.

\* Mat. 11. 26.

\* John 11. 41.  
John 12. 1.



The holy men of God have employed the body in significant expressions of worship: *Abraham* in falling on his face, *Paul* in kneeling, employing their Tongues, lifting up their hands. Tho *Jacob* was bedrid, yet he would not worship God without some devout expression of Reverence; tis in one place *leaning upon his staff*; \* in another *bearing himself upon his beds head*: \* The reason of the diversity is in the Heb. word, which without vowels may be read *Mittah* a bed, or *Matteh* a staff; however, both signify a Testimony of adoration by a reverent gesture of the body. Indeed in Angels and separated Souls a worship is performed purely by the Spirit; but while the Soul is in conjunction with the body, it can hardly perform a serious act of worship, without some tincture upon the outward man and reverential composure of the body: Fire cannot be in the clothes, but it will be felt by the members; nor flames be pent up in the Soul without bursting out in the body: The heart can no more restrain it self from breaking out, than *Joseph* could enclose his affections, without expressing them in tears to his Brethren. \* We Believe, and therefore speak.\*

To conclude; God hath appointed some parts of worship which cannot be performed without the body, as Sacraments; we have need of them because we are not wholly spiritual and incorporeal Creatures.

The Religion, which consists in externals only, is not for an intellectual nature: A worship purely intellectual is too sublime for a nature allyed to sense and depending much upon it: The Christian mode of worship is proportioned to both; It makes the sense to assist the mind, and elevates the spirit above the sense: Bodily worship helps the spiritual: The members of the body reflect back upon the heart, the voice bars distractions, the tongue sets the heart on fire in good as well as in evil. Tis as much against the light of nature to serve God without external significations, as to serve him only with them without the intention of the mind. As the invisible God declares himself to men by visible works and signs, so should we declare our invisible frames by visible expressions: God hath given us a soul and body in conjunction, and we are to serve him in the same manner he hath framed us.

2. The second thing I am to shew, is, *what Spiritual worship is*. In general, the whole Spirit is to be employed: The name of God is not sanctified but by the engagement of our Souls.

Worship is an Act of the understanding, applying it self to the knowledge of the excellency of God and actual thoughts of his Majesty, recognizing him as the supreme Lord and Governour of the world, which is natural knowledge; beholding the glory of his Attributes in the Redeemer, which is Evangelical knowledge: This is the sole act of the Spirit of Man. The same reason is for all our worship as for our thanksgiving: This must be done with understanding, *Psal. 47. 7. Sing ye praise with understanding*, with a knowledge and sense of his greatness, goodness and Wisdom. Tis also an act of the Will, whereby the Soul adores and reverenceth his Majesty, is ravished with his amiableness, embraceth his goodness, enters it self into an intimate Communion with this most lovely object, and pitcheth all his affections upon him.

We must worship God understandingly; tis not else a reasonable service: The nature of God and the Law of God abhor a blind offering; we must worship him heartily, else we offer him a dead Sacrifice: A reasonable service is that wherein the mind doth truly act something with God. All Spiritual acts must be acts of reason, otherwise they are not human acts, because they want that principle which is constitutive of man, and doth difference him from other Creatures: Acts done only by sense are the acts of a brute; acts done by reason are the acts of a man; That which is only an act of sense, cannot be an act of Religion: The sense without the conduct of reason is not the subject of Religious acts, for then beasts were capable of Religion as well as Men: There cannot be Religion where there is not reason; and there cannot be the exercise of Religion, where there is not an exercise of the rational faculties. Nothing can be a Christian act, that is not a human act: Besides, all worship must be for some end; the worship of God must be for God; tis by the exercise of our rational faculties, that we only can intend an end: An Ignorant and Carnal worship is a brutish worship.

Particularly,

1. Spiritual



1. *Spiritual Worship is a Worship from a spiritual Nature.* Not only Physically spiritual, so our Souls are in their frame ; but morally spiritual, by a renewing principle. The heart must be first cast into the Mould of the Gospel, before it can perform a Worship required by the Gospel. *Adam* living in Paradise, might perform a spiritual worship ; but *Adam* fallen from his rectitude, could not : We being Heirs of his Nature, are Heirs of his Impotence : Restoration to a spiritual Life, must precede any act of spiritual Worship. As no work can be good, so no worship can be spiritual, till we are created in Christ\*. Christ is our Life\*. As no natural action can be performed without life in the root or heart, so no spiritual act without Christ in the Soul : Our being in Christ, is as necessary to every spiritual act, as the union of our Soul with our Body, is necessary to natural action. Nothing can exceed the limits of its nature ; for then it should exceed itself in acting, and do that which it hath no principle to do. A Beast cannot act like a Man, without partaking of the nature of a Man ; nor a Man act like an Angel, without partaking of the Angelical nature : How can we perform spiritual acts, without a spiritual principle. Whatsoever worship proceeds from the corrupted nature, cannot deserve the title of spiritual worship, because it springs not from a spiritual habit. If those that are *evil cannot speak good things*, those that are carnal cannot offer a spiritual service. Poyson is the fruit of a *Vipers* nature, *Mat. 12. 34. Oh, Generation of Vipers, how can you being evil speak good things ? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.* As the root is, so is the fruit. If the Soul be habitually carnal, the worship cannot be actually spiritual : There may be an intention of Spirit, but there is no spiritual principle as a root of that intention. A heart may be sensibly united with a duty, when it is not spiritually united with Christ in it. Carnal motives, and carnal ends may fix the mind in an act of worship, as the sense of some pressing affliction may enlarge a mans mind in Prayer. Whatsoever is agreeable to the nature of God, must have a stamp of Christ upon it ; a stamp of his grace in performance, as well as of his mediation in the acceptance. *The Apostle lived not, but Christ lived in him\** ; the Soul worships not, but Christ in him : Not that Christ performs the act of Worship ; but enables us spiritually to worship, after he enables us spiritually to live. As God counts not any Soul living but in Christ, so he counts not any a spiritual Worshipper but in Christ. The goodness and fatness of the fruit comes from the fatness of the Olive wherein we are engrafted : We must find healing in Christs wings, before God can find spirituality in our services. All worship issuing from a dead nature, is but a dead service : A living action cannot be performed, without being knit to a living root.

\* Eph. 2. 10.  
\* Col. 3. 4.

\* Gal. 2. 20.

2. *Spiritual Worship is done by the influence, and with the assistance of the Spirit of God.* A Heart may be spiritual, when a particular act of Worship may not be spiritual. The Spirit may dwell in the Heart, when he may suspend his influence on the act. Our worship is then spiritual, when the fire that kindles our affections comes from Heaven, as that fire upon the Altar wherewith the Sacrifices were consumed. God tastes a sweetness in no service, but as it is drest up by the hand of the Mediator, and hath the Air of his own Spirit in it : They are but natural acts, without a supernatural assistance : Without an actual influence, we cannot act from spiritual motives, nor for spiritual ends, nor in a spiritual manner. We cannot *mortifie* a Lust without the *Spirit\**, nor quicken a service without the Spirit. Whatsoever corruption is killed, is slain by his Power ; whatsoever duty is spiritualized, is refined by his Breath. He *quickens our dead bodies* in our Resurrection\* ; He renews our dead Souls in our Regeneration ; He quickens our carnal services in our adorations : The choicest acts of worship are but *infirmities*, without his auxiliary *help\**. We are *Loggs*, unable to move our selves, till he raise our faculties to a pitch agreeable to God ; puts his hand to the duty, and lifts that up and us with it. Never any great act was performed by the *Apostles* to God, or for God, but they are said to be filled with the Holy-Ghost. Christ could not have been conceived immaculate as that *holy thing*, without the Spirits overshadowing the Virgin ; nor any spiritual act conceived in our heart, without the Spirits moving upon us, to bring forth a living Religion from us. The acts of worship are said to be in the Spirit, *Supplication in the Spirit\** ; not only with the strength and affection of our own Spirits, but with the mighty operation of the Holy-Ghost, if *Jude* may be the Interpreter\*. The Holy-Ghost

\* Rom. 8. 13.

\* Rom. 8. 11.

\* Rom. 8. 26.

\* Eph. 6. 18.

\* Jude 20.

exci-



exciting us; impelling us, and firing our Souls by his divine flame; raising up the affections, and making the Soul cry with a holy importunity *Abba Father*. To render our worship spiritual, we should, before every ingagement in it, implore the actual presence of the Spirit, without which we are not able to send forth one spiritual breath or groan; but be Wind-bound like a Ship without a Gale, and our worship be no better than carnal. How doth the Spouse sollicit the Spirit with an *awake oh North-wind, and come thou South-wind*, &c.

\* Cant. 4. 16.

3. *Spiritual Worship is done with Sincerity*: When the heart stands right to God, and the Soul performs what it pretends to perform: When we serve God with our Spirits, as the Apostle, *Rom. 1. 9. God is my Witness, whom I serve with my Spirit in the Gospel of his Son*: This is not meant of the Holy-Ghost; for the Apostle would never have called the Spirit of God, his own Spirit; but with *my Spirit*, that is a sincere frame of heart. A Carnal-worship, whether under the Law or Gospel, is when we are busied about external rites, without an inward compliance of Soul. God demands the heart; \* my Son give me thy heart; not give me thy tongue, or thy lips, or thy hands; these may be given without the heart, but the heart can never be bestowed without these as its attendants. A heap of services can be no more welcome to God, without our Spirits, than all *Jacobs* Sons could be to *Joseph*, without the *Benjamin* he desired to see. God is not taken with the Cabinet, but the Jewel: He first respected *Abels* Faith and Sincerity, and then his Sacrifice; he disrespected *Cains* Infidelity and Hypocrisy, and then his Offering. [For this cause he rejected the Offerings of the *Jews*, the Prayers of the *Pharisees*, and the Alms of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, because their hearts and their duties were at a distance from one another. In all spiritual Sacrifices, our Spirits are Gods portion. Under the Law, the Reins were to be consumed by the Fire on the Altar, because the secret intentions of the heart were signified by them, *Psal. 7. 9. The Lord trieth the Heart and the Reins*. It was an ill Omen among the Heathen, if a Victim wanted a heart. The Widows Mites with her heart in them, were more esteemed than the richer Offerings without it.] Not the quantity of service, but the will in it, is of account with this infinite Spirit. All that was to be brought for the framing of the Tabernacle, was to be offered *willingly with the heart*. \* The more of Will, the more of Spirituality and Acceptableness to God, *Psal. 119. 108. Accept the Free-will-offering of my lips*. Sincerity is the Salt which seasons every Sacrifice. The heart is most like to the object of worship: The heart in the body is the spring of all vital actions; and a spiritual Soul is the spring of all spiritual actions. How can we imagin God can delight in the meer service of the Body, any more than we can delight in converse with a Carcase?

\* Pro. 23. 26.

\* *Moulins*. Sermons Decad. 4. Ser. 4. P. 8.

\* Exod. 25. 7.

\* Rom. 10. 10.

\* Hof. 11. 12.

\* Revel. 2. 9.

Without the heart 'tis no worship: 'Tis a Stage-play; an acting a part without being that person really which is acted by us: A Hypocrite in the notion of the word, is a Stage-player. We may as well say a man may believe with his body, as worship God only with his body. Faith, is a great ingredient in Worship; and it is *with the heart* Man believes unto Righteousness. \* We may be truly said to worship God, though we want perfection; but we cannot be said to worship him, if we want sincerity: A Statue upon a Tomb, with eyes and hands lifted up, offers as good and true a service; it wants only a voice, the gestures and postures are the same; nay, the service is better; 'tis not a mockery; it represents all that it can be framed to: But to worship without our Spirits, is a presenting God with a Picture, an Echo, Voice and nothing else; a Complement; a meer Lye: a *compassing him about with Lyes*. \* Without the heart, the tongue is a Liar, and the greatest Zeal, dissembling with him. To present the Spirit, is to present with that which can never naturally dye; to present him only the Body, is to present him that which is every day crumbling to dust, and will at last lye rotting in the Grave: To offer him a few Raggs easily torn; a Skin for a Sacrifice, a thing unworthy the Majesty of God; a fixed eye and elevated hands, with a sleepy Heart and earthly Soul are pitiful things for an ever blessed and glorious Spirit: Nay, it is so far from being spiritual, that it is Blasphemy; To pretend to be a *Jew outwardly*, without being so inwardly, is in the Judgment of Christ to blaspheme. \* And is not the same title to be given with as much reason to those that pretend a worship and perform none? Such a one is not a spiritual Worshipper, but a blaspheming Devil in *Samuel's* Mantle.

4. *Spiri-*



4. *Spiritual Worship is performed with an unitedness of heart.* The heart is not only now and then with God, but *united to fear or worship his name.*\* A spiritual duty must have the engagement of the Spirit, and the thoughts tyed up to the spiritual Object: The union of all the parts of the heart together with the body, is the life of the body; and the moral union of our hearts, is the life of any duty. A heart quickly flitting from God, makes not God his treasure; he flights the worship, and therein affronts the Object of Worship. All our thoughts ought to be ravished with God; bound up in him as in a bundle of life: But when we start from him to gaze after every feather, and run after every bubble; we disown a full and affecting excellency, and a satisfying sweetness in him. When our thoughts run from God, 'tis a testimony we have no spiritual affection to God: Affection would stake down the thoughts to the Object affected: 'Tis but a *Mouth-love*, as the *Prophet* phraseth it\*: But their hearts go *after their Covetousness*: Covetous Objects pipe, and the heart danceth after them; and thoughts of God are shifted off, to receive a multitude of other imaginations: The heart and the service stayed a while together, and then took leave of one another. The *Psalmist*\* still found his heart with God when he *awak'd*; still with God in spiritual affections, and fixed meditations. A carnal heart is seldom with God, either in or out of worship: If God should knock at the heart in any duty, it would be found not at home, but straying abroad. Our worship is spiritual, when the door of the heart is shut against all Intruders, as our Saviour commands in *Closet-duties*\*: It was not his meaning, to command the shutting the Closet-door, and leave the Heart-door open for every thought that would be apt to haunt us. Worldly affections are to be laid aside, if we would have our worship spiritual. This was meant by the Jewish custom of wiping or washing off the dust of their feet, before their entrance into the Temple; and of not bringing mony in their girdles. To be spiritual in worship, is to have our Souls gathered and bound up wholly in themselves, and offered to God. Our Loyns must be girt, as the fashion was in the Eastern Countries, where they wore long Garments, that they might not waver with the Wind, and be blown between their leggs, to obstruct them in their travel: Our faculties must not hang loose about us. He is a carnal Worshipper, that gives God but a piece of his heart, as well as he that denies him the whole of it; that hath some thoughts pitch'd upon God in worship, and as many willingly upon the World. *David* sought God, not with a moiety of his heart, but with *his whole heart*; with his intire frame\*: He brought not half his heart, and left the other in the possession of another Master. It was a good lesson *Pythagoras* gave his Scholars\*, *Not to make the Observance of God a work by the by*. If those Guests be invited, or entertained kindly, or if they come unexpected, the spirituality of that worship is lost; the Soul kicks down what it wrought before: But if they be Brow-beaten by us, and our grief, rather than our pleasure; they divert our spiritual intention from the work in hand, but hinder not Gods acceptance of it as spiritual; because they are not the acts of our Will, but offences to our Wills.

5. *Spiritual Worship is performed with a spiritual activity and sensibleness of God.* With an active Understanding to meditate on his excellency; and an active Will to embrace him when he drops upon the Soul. If we understand the amiableness of God, our affections will be ravisht; if we understand the immensity of his goodness, our Spirits will be enlarged. We are to act with the highest intention, suitable to the greatness of that God with whom we have to do, *Psal.* 150. 2. *Praise him according to his excellent greatness*: Not that we can worship him equally, but in some proportion, the frame of the heart is to be suted to the excellency of the Object: Our spiritual strength is to be put out to the utmost, as Creatures that act naturally do: The Sun shines, and the Fire burns to the utmost of their natural power. This is so necessary, that *David* a spiritual Worshipper prays for it before he sets upon acts of adoration, *Psal.* 80. 18. *quicken us, that we may call upon thy Name*: As he was loth to have a drowzy faculty, he was loth to have a drowzy instrument, and would willingly have them as lively as himself, *Psal.* 57. 8. *Awake up my glory; awake Psaltery and Harp; I my self will awake early*: How would this Divine Soul scrue himself up to God, and be turned into nothing but a holy flame?

\* *Rom.* 12. 11. Our Souls must be boyling hot when we serve the Lord\*. The heart doth no less burn



burn when it Spiritually comes to God, than when God doth Spiritually approach to it. \* A *Nabals* heart, one as cold as a stone, cannot offer up a Spiritual service. \* Luke 24. 32.

Whatsoever is enjoined us as our duty, ought to be performed with the greatest intenseness of our Spirit. As it is our duty to pray, so it is our duty to pray with the most fervent importunity. 'Tis our duty to love God, but with the purest and most sublime affections: Every Command of God requires the whole strength of the Creature to be employed in it. That love to God, wherein all our duty to God is summed up, is to be with all our strength, with all our might, &c. \* Tho in the Covenant of grace he hath mitigated the severity of the Law, and requires not from us such an elevation of our affections as was possible in the state of innocence, yet God requires of us the utmost moral industry to raise our affections to a pitch, at least equal to what they are in other things: What strength of affection we naturally have, ought to be as much and more excited in acts of worship than upon other occasions and our ordinary works. As there was an inactivity of Soul in worship and a quickness to sin, when sin had the dominion; so when the Soul is Spiritualized, the temper is changed; there is an inactivity to sin and an ardor in duty: The more the Soul is *dead to sin* the more it is *alive to God*, \* and the more lively too in all that concerns God and his honour. For grace being a new strength added to our natural, determines the affections to new objects and excites them to a greater vigor. And as the hatred of sin is more sharp, the love to every thing that destroys the dominion of it, is more strong. And acts of worship may be reckoned as the cheifest batteries against the power of this inbred enemy. When the Spirit is in the Soul, like the Rivers of waters flowing out of the belly, the Soul hath the activity of a River, and makes halt to be swallowed up in God, as the streams of the River in the Sea. Christ makes his people *Kings and Priests to God*; \* first Kings, then Priests: Gives first a Royal temper of heart, that they may offer Spiritual Sacrifices as Priests; Kings and Priests to God acting with a magnificent Spirit in all their motions to him: We cannot be Spiritual Priests, till we be Spiritual Kings. The Spirit appeared in the likeness of fire, and where he resides, Communicates like fire purity and activity. \* Rom. 6. 11.

Dulness is against the light of nature. I do not remember that the *Heathen* ever offered a Snail to any of their false Deities, nor an Ass, but to *Priapus* their unclean Idol; but the *Persians* Sacrificed to the *Sun* a *Horse*, a swift and generous Creature. God provided against those in the Law, Commanding an Asses Firstling, the off-spring of a sluggish Creature, to be *Redeemed*, or his *neck broke*; but by no means to be offered to him. \* God is a Spirit infinitely active, and therefore frozen and benumbed frames are unsuitable to him: He *rides upon a Cherub* and flies, he comes upon the *wings of the wind*, he rides upon a *swift cloud*; \* and therefore demands of us not a dull reason, but an active Spirit: God is a living God, therefore must have a lively service. Christ is life, and slothful adorations are not fit to be offered up in the name of life. The worship of God is called wrestling in Scripture, and *Paul* was a *striver* in the service of his Master, \* *in an agony*. \* Angels worship God Spiritually with their wings on; and when God Commands them to worship Christ, the next Scripture quoted is, that he makes them *flames of fire*. \* Exod. 13. 13.

If it be thus, how may we charge our selves? What *Paul* said of the sensual *Widow*, \* that she is *dead while she lives*, we may say often of our Selves, we are dead while we worship. Our hearts are in duty as the *Jews* were in deliverances; as those *in a dream*; \* by which unexpectedness, God shewed the greatness of his care and mercy; and we attend him as men in a dream whereby we discover our negligence and folly. This activity doth not consist in outward acts. The body may be hot and the heart may be faint; but in an inward stirring, meltings, flights. In the highest raptures the body is most insensible. Strong Spiritual affections are abstracted from outward sense. \* Isa. 19. 1.

6. *Spiritual worship is performed with acting Spiritual habits.* When all the living springs of Grace are opened, as the Fountains of the deep were in the deluge, the Soul and all that is within it, all the Spiritual impresses of God upon it, erect themselves to *bless his holy name*. \* Col. 1. 29.

This is necessary to make a worship Spiritual. As natural agents are determined \* Heb. 1. 7.



to act futable to their proper nature ; So rational agents, are to act conformable to a rational being : When there is a conformity between the act and the nature whence it flows, tis a good act in its kind ; if it be rational, tis a good rational act, because futable to its principle : As a *Man* endowed with *reason* must act futable to that endowment, and exercise his reason in his acting ; So a *Christian* endued with *Grace* must act futable to that nature, and exercise his *Grace* in his acting. Acts done by a natural inclination are no more human acts, than the natural acts of a beast may be said to be human ; Tho they are the acts of a Man as he is the efficient cause of them, yet they are not human acts, because they arise not from that principle of Reason which denominates him a man. So acts of worship performed by a bare exercise of reason, are not Christian and Spiritual acts, because they come not from the principle which constitutes him a Christian ; Reason is not the principle, for then all rational Creatures would be Christians : They ought therefore to be acts of a higher principle ; Exercises of that Grace whereby Christians are what they are : Not but that rational acts in worship are due to God ; for worship is due from us as men ; and we are settled in that rank of being by our reason. Grace doth not exclude reason, but ennobles it, and calls it up to another form : But we must not rest in a bare rational worship, but exert that principle whereby we are Christians. To worship God with our reason, is to worship him as Men : To worship God with our grace, is to worship him as Christians, and so Spiritually : But to worship him only with our bodies, is no better than Brutes.

Our desires of the word are to issue from the regenerate principle, 1 Pet. 2. 2. *As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word* : It seems to be not a comparison but a restriction. All worship must have the same spring, and be the exercise of that principle ; otherwise we can have no Communion with God. Friends that have the same habitual dispositions, have a fundamental fitness for an agreeable converse with one another ; but if the temper wherein their likeness consists, be languishing, and the string out of tune, there is not an actual fitness ; and the present indisposition breaks the converse, and renders the Company troublesome. Tho we may have the habitual graces which compose in us a resemblance to God, yet for want of acting those futable dispositions, we render our selves unfit for his converse, and make the worship, which is fundamentally Spiritual, to become actually carnal. As the Will cannot naturally act to any object, but by the exercise of its affections : So the heart cannot Spiritually act towards God, but by the exercise of graces. This is Gods Musick : Eph. 5. 19. *Singing and making melody to God in your hearts*. Singing and all other acts of worship are outward, but the Spiritual melody is *by grace in the heart*. Col. 3. 16. This renders it a Spiritual worship ; for it is an effect of the fulness of the Spirit in the soul, as v. 19. *But be filled with the Spirit* : The overflowing of the Spirit in the heart, setting the Soul of a believer thus on work to make a Spiritual melody to God, shews that something higher than bare reason is put in tune in the heart. Then is the fruit of the Garden pleasant to Christ, when the holy Spirit, *the North and South wind blow upon the spices*, and strike out the fragrancy of them. \* Since God is the Author of graces, and bestows them to have a glory from them, they are best employed about him and his service. Tis fit he should have the Cream of his own gifts. Without the exercise of grace we perform but a work of nature, and offer him a few dry bones without marrow.

The whole set of graces must be one way or other exercised. If any treble be wanting in a Lute, there will be a great defect in the Musick. If any one Spiritual string be dull, the Spiritual harmony of worship will be spoiled.

And therefore,

1. First, *Faith must be acted in worship*. *A confidence in God*. A natural worship cannot be performed without a natural confidence in the goodness of God. Whosoever comes to him, must regard him as a *Rewarder* and a faithful Creator. \* A Spiritual worship cannot be performed without an Evangelical confidence in him as a gracious Redeemer. To think him a Tyrant meditating revenge, damps the Soul ; to regard him as a gracious King full of tender bowels, Spirits the affections to him. The *mercy* of God is the proper object of trust ; Psal. 33. 18. *The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy*. The worship of God in the old Testament is most described by *fear* : In the new Testament by *faith*. Fear, or the worship of God and hope in his mercy are linkt together ;

\* Cant. 4. 16.

\* Heb. 11. 6.



ther ; when they go hand in hand, the accepting eye of God is upon us : When we do not trust, we do not worship. Those of *Judah* had the Temple worship among them, especially in *Josiah's* time, *Zeph. 3. 2.* the time of that Prophecy ; yet it was accounted no worship, because no *trust* in the Worshippers. Interest in God, cannot be improved without an exercise of Faith. The Gospel worship is prophesied of, to be a confidence in God, as in a *Husband* more than in a Lord, *Hof. 2. 16.* *Thou shalt call me Ishi, and shalt call me no more Baali : Thou shalt call me,* that is, thou shalt worship me, Worship being often comprehended under Invocation. More confidence is to be exercised in a Husband or Father, than in a Lord or Master.

\* *Zeph. 3. 2.*

If a Man have not Faith, he is without Christ ; and though a Man be in Christ by the habit of Faith, he performs a duty out of Christ without an act of Faith : Without the habit of Faith, our persons are out of Christ ; and without the exercise of Faith, the duties are out of Christ. As the want of Faith in a person is the death of the Soul ; so the want of Faith in a Service, is the death of the Offering. Though a man were at the cost of an Ox ; yet to kill it without bringing it to the door of the Tabernacle, was not a Sacrifice, but a Murder. The Tabernacle was a Type of Christ ; and a look to him is necessary in every spiritual Sacrifice. As there must be Faith to make any act, an act of obedience ; so there must be Faith to make any act of worship, spiritual. That service is not spiritual, that is not vital ; and it cannot be vital, without the exercise of a vital Principle : All spiritual life is hid in Christ, and drawn from him by Faith\*. Faith as it hath relation to Christ, makes every act of worship, a living act, and consequently a spiritual act. Habitual unbelief, cuts us off from the Body of Christ, *Rom. 11. 20.* *Because of unbelief they were broken off ;* and a want of actuated belief, breaks us off from a present communion with Christ in Spirit. As unbelief in us hinders Christ from doing any mighty work, so unbelief in us hinders us from doing any mighty spiritual duty.

\* *Levit. 17. 3, 4.*

\* *Gal. 2. 20.*

So that the exercise of Faith, and a confidence in God, is necessary to every duty.

2. *Love must be acted to render a worship spiritual.* Though God commanded love in the Old-Testament ; yet the manner of giving the Law, bespoke more of Fear than Love. The dispensation of the Law, was with *Fire, Thunder, &c.* proper to raise horror, and benum the Spirit ; which effect it had upon the *Israelites*, when they desired that God would speake no more to them. Grace is the Genius of the Gospel, proper to excite the affection of Love. The Law was given by the disposition of Angels, with signs to amaze ; the Gospel was usher'd in with the songs of Angels, composed of peace and good-will, calculated to ravish the Soul. Instead of the terrible voice of the Law, *do this and live :* The comfortable voice of the Gospel is *Grace, Grace :* Upon this account, the principle of the Old testament was Fear ; and the Worship often exprest by the Fear of God. The principle of the New-testament is Love. The Mount Sinai gendreth to Bondage\* ; Mount Sion, from whence the Gospel or Evangelical Law goes forth, gendreth to Liberty ; and therefore the spirit of Bondage unto Fear, as the Property of the Law is opposed to the State of Adoption ; the principle of Love, as the property of the Gospel\*. And therefore the worship of God under the Gospel, or New-testament, is oftner exprest by Love than Fear ; as proceeding from higher principles, and acting nobler passions. In this State, we are to serve him without fear ;\* without a Bondage-fear ; not without a fear of unworthy treating him ; with a fear of his goodness as it is prophesied of\* : Goodness is not the object of terror, but reverence. God in the Law, had more the garb of a Judge ; in the Gospel, of a Father : The name of a Father is sweeter, and bespeaks more of affection. As their services were with a feeling of the thunders of the Law in their Consciences ; so is our worship to be with a sense of Gospel-grace in our Spirits : Spiritual worship is that therefore, which is exercised with a spiritual and heavenly affection, proper to the Gospel. The heart should be enlarged, according to the liberty the Gospel gives of drawing neer to God as a Father : As he gives us the nobler relation of Children, we are to act the nobler qualities of Children. Love should act according to its nature, which is desire of Union ; desire of a moral union by Affections, as well as a mystical union by Faith ; as flame aspires to reach flame, and become one with it. In every act of worship,

\* *Gal. 4. 44.*

\* *Rom. 8. 15.*

\* *Luke 1. 74.*

\* *Hof. 9. 9.*



we should endeavour to be united to God, and become one Spirit with him: This Grace doth spiritualize Worship: In that one word *Love*, God hath wrapt up all the devotion he requires of us: 'Tis the total sum of the first Table, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*. 'Tis to be acted in every thing we do: But in Worship, our hearts should more solemnly rise up and acknowledge him amiable and lovely, since the Law is stript of its cursing power, and made sweet in the blood of the Redeemer. Love is a thing acceptable of it self; but nothing acceptable without it. The gifts of one man to another are spiritualized by it. We would not value a Present, without the affection of the Donor: Every man would lay claim to the love of others, though he would not to their Possessions. Love is Gods right in every service, and the noblest thing we can bestow upon him in our adorations of him. Gods gifts to us are not so estimable, without his love; nor our services valuable by him, without the exercise of a choice affection. *Hezekiah* regarded not his deliverance, without the love of the Deliverer; *In love to my Soul thou hast delivered me*\*: So doth God say, in love to my honour thou hast worshipped me.

So that Love must be acted, to render our worship spiritual.

3. *A spiritual sensibleness of our own weakness, is necessary to make our worship spiritual.* Affections to God cannot be without relents in our selves. When the eye is spiritually fixed upon a spiritual God, the heart will mourn, that the worship is no more spiritually sutable. The more we act love upon God, as amiable and gracious, the more we should exercise grief in our selves, as we are vile and offending. Spiritual worship is a melting worship, as well as an elevating worship; It exalts God, and debaseth the Creature. The Publican was more spiritual in his humble address to God, when the Pharisee was wholly carnal with his swelling language. A spiritual love in worship will make us grieve, that we have given him so little, and could give him no more. 'Tis a part of spiritual duty to bewail our carnality mixed with it; as we receive mercies spiritually, when we receive them with a sense of Gods goodness and our own vileness, in the same manner we render a spiritual worship.

4. *Spiritual desires for God render the service spiritual.* When the Soul follows hard after him\*; pursues after God as a God of infinite and communicative goodness, with sighs and groans unutterable. A spiritual Soul seems to be transformed into hunger, and thirst, and becomes nothing but desire. A carnal Worshipper is taken with the beauty and magnificence of the Temple; a spiritual Worshipper desires to see the glory of God in the Sanctuary\*; He pants after God: As he came to worship, to find God, he boils up in desires for God, and is loth to go from it without God, the living God, Psal. 42. 2. He would see the *Urim* and the *Thummim*; the unusual sparkling of the stones upon the High-priests Breast-plate. That deserves not the title of spiritual worship, when the Soul makes no longing inquiries; *saw you him whom my Soul loves*? A spiritual worship is, when our desires are chiefly for God in the worship: As *David* desires to dwell in the House of the Lord; but his desire is not terminated there, but to behold the beauty of the Lord\*, and taste the ravishing sweetness of his presence. No doubt but *Elijah's* desires for the enjoyment of God, while he was mounting to Heaven, were as fiery as the Chariot wherein he was carried. Unutterable groans acted in worship, are the fruit of the Spirit, and certainly render it a spiritual service\*. Strong appetites are agreeable to God, and prepare us to eat the fruit of worship. A spiritual *Paul* presseth forward to know Christ, and the power of his Resurrection; and a spiritual Worshipper actually aspires in every duty to know God, and the power of his Grace. To desire worship as an end, is carnal; to desire it as a means, and act desires in it for communion with God in it, is spiritual, and the fruit of a spiritual life.

5. *Thankfulness, and admiration are to be exercised in spiritual services.* This is a worship of Spirits. Praise is the adoration of the blessed Angels\*, and of glorified Spirits, Rev. 4. 11. *Thou art worthy oh Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power*: And, Rev. 5. 13. 14. they worship him, ascribing Blessing, Honour, Glory and Power to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. Other acts of worship are confined to this Life, and leave us as soon as we have set our foot in Heaven; There, no notes but this of Praise are warbled out: The Power, Wisdom, Love and Grace in the dispensation of the Gospel, seat themselves in the thoughts and tongues of blef-

\* Isa. 38. 17.

\* Psal. 63. 8.

\* Psal. 63. 2.

\* Psal. 27. 4.

\* Rom. 8. 25.

\* Isa. 6. 3.



bleſſed Souls. Can a worſhip on Earth be ſpiritual, that hath no mixture of an eternal heavenly duty with it? The worſhip of God in Innocence, had been chiefly an admiration of him in the works of Creation; and ſhould not our Evangelical worſhip be an admiration of him in the works of Redemption, which is a reſtoration to a better State? After the petitioning for pardoning Grace\*, there is a rendring the *Calves* or *Heifers of our lips*, alluding to the Heifers uſed in Eucharistical Sacrifices. The Praise of God is the choiceſt Sacrifice and Worſhip, under a diſpenſation of redeeming Grace; This is the prime and eternal part of worſhip under the Goſpel. The *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſalm 149.* and *150.* ſpeaking of the Goſpel times, ſpurrs on to this kind of worſhip; *Sing to the Lord a new Song; Let the Children of Zion be joyful in their King; Let the Saints be joyful in glory, and ſing aloud upon their beds; Let the high praises of God be in their mouths:* He begins and ends both *Pſalms* with *praiſe ye the Lord.* That cannot be a ſpiritual and evangelical worſhip, that hath nothing of the praiſe of God in the heart. The conſideration of Gods adorable perfections diſcovered in the Goſpel, will make us come to him with more ſeriouſneſs; beg bleſſings of him with more confidence; fly to him with a winged Faith and Love, and more ſpiritually glorify him in our attendances upon him.

\* Hoſ. 14. 2.

7. *Spiritual Worſhip is performed with delight.* The Evangelical worſhip is prophetically ſignified by keeping the Feaſt of Tabernacles; *they ſhall go up from year to year, to worſhip the King the Lord of Hoſts, and to keep the Feaſt of Tabernacles:* Why that Feaſt, when there were other Feaſts obſerved by the Jews? That was a Feaſt celebrated with the greateſt joy; typical of the gladneſs which was to be under the exhibition of the *Meſſiah*, and a thankful commemoration of the Redemption wrought by him. It was to be celebrated five days after the *ſolemn day of Atonement*, *Levit. 23. 34.* compared with *v. 27.* wherein there was one of the ſolemneſt types of the Sacrifice of the death of Chriſt. In this Feaſt they commemorated their exchange of *Egypt* for *Canaan*; the Manna wherewith they were fed; the Water out of the Rock wherewith they were reſreſht: In remembrance of this, they poured water on the ground, pronouncing thoſe words in *Iſaiah*, *they ſhall draw waters out of the Wells of Salvation*, which our Saviour refers to himſelf, *John 7. 37.* inviting them to him, to drink, *upon the laſt day, the great day of the Feaſt of Tabernacles*, wherein this ſolemn Ceremony was obſerved. Since we are freed by the death of the Redeemer from the Curſes of the Law, God requires of us a Joy in ſpiritual privileges. A ſad frame in worſhip, gives the lye to all Goſpel-liberty; to the Purchase of the Redeemers Death; the Triumphs of his Reſurrection: 'Tis a carriage, as if we were under the influences of the legal Fire and Lightning, and an entering a Proteſt againſt the Freedom of the Goſpel. The Evangelical worſhip is a ſpiritual worſhip; and *Praiſe, Joy and Delight* are prophecied of, as great ingredients in attendance on Goſpel Ordinances, *Iſa. 12. 3, 4, 5.* What was occaſion of terror in the worſhip of God under the Law, is the occaſion of delight in the worſhip of God under the Goſpel. The Juſtice and Holineſs of God ſo terrible in the Law, becomes comfortable under the Goſpel, ſince they have feaſted themſelves on the active and paſſive obedience of the Redeemer. The approach is to God as gracious, not to God as unpacified; as a Son to a Father, not as a Criminal to a Judge. Under the Law God was repreſented as a Judge, remembering their Sin in their Sacrifices, and repreſenting the puniſhment they had merited; in the Goſpel as a Father, accepting the Atonement, and publiſhing the Reconciliation wrought by the Redeemer. Delight in God, is a Goſpel frame; therefore the more joyful, the more ſpiritual: *The Sabbath is to be a delight*; not only in regard of the Day, but in regard of the Duties of it\*; in regard of the marvelous work he wrought on it; raiſing up our bleſſed Redeemer on that day, whereby a foundation was laid for the rendring our perſons and ſervices acceptable to God, *Pſal. 118. 24.* *This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will be glad and rejoyce in it.* A lumpiſh frame becomes not a day and a duty, that hath ſo noble and ſpiritual a mark upon it.

\* Zach. 14. 16.

\* Iſa. 58. 13.

The *Angels* in the firſt act of worſhip after the Creation, were highly joyful, *Job. 38. 7.* They *ſhouted for joy, &c.*

The Saints have particularly acted this in their Worſhip. *David* would not content



tent himself with an approach to the Altar, without going to God as his *exceeding joy*, Psal. 43. 4. My triumphant joy: When he danced before the Ark, he seems to be transformed into delight and pleasure, 2 Sam. 6. 14, 16. He had as much delight in Worship, as others had in their Harvest and Vintage. And those that took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods, would as joyfully attend upon the Communications of God. Where there is a fullness of the Spirit, there is a *making melody to God in the heart*\*; and where there is an acting of love, (as there is in all spiritual services) the proper fruit of it is joy in a neer approach to the Object of the Souls affection. Love is *appetitus unionis*: The more love, the more delight in the approachings of God to the Soul, or the out-goings of the Soul to God. As the Object of Worship is amiable in a spiritual eye, so the means tending to a communion with this Object are delightful in the exercise: Where there is no delight in a duty, there is no delight in the object of the duty; The more of grace, the more of pleasure in the actings of it: As the more of nature there is in any natural Agent, the more of pleasure in the Act; So the more heavenly the Worship, the more spiritual. Delight is the frame and temper of Glory. A heart filled up to the brim with joy, is a heart *filled up to the brim with the Spirit*: Joy is the fruit of the Holy-Ghost.\*

\* Eph. 5. 18. 19.

\* Gal. 5. 22.

1. *Not the joy of Gods dispensation flowing from God, but a gracious active joy streaming to God.* There is a joy, when the Comforts of God are dropt into the Soul, as Oyle upon the Wheel; which indeed makes the faculties move with more speed and activity in his service, like the *Chariots of Aminadab*: And a Soul may serve God in the strength of this taste, and its delight terminated in the sensible comfort. This is not the joy I mean, but such a joy that hath God for its Object, delighting in him as the term, in worship as the way to him: The first is Gods dispensation, the other is our duty; The first is an act of Gods favour to us, the second a sprout of habitual grace in us. The Comforts we have from God, may elevate our duties; but the grace we have within, doth spiritualize our duties.

2. *Nor is every delight an argument of a spiritual service.* All the the requisites to worship must be taken in. A man may invent a worship, and delight in it; as *Micah* in the adoration of his Idol, when he was glad he had got both an *Ephod* and a *Levite*\*. As a man may have a contentment in Sin, so he may have a contentment in Worship; not because it is a worship of God, but the worship of his own invention, agreeable to his own humor and design, as *Isa.* 58. 2. 'tis said, they *delighted in approaching to God*, but it was for carnal ends. Novelty ingenders Complacency; but it must be a worship wherein God will delight; and that must be a worship according to his own Rule and infinite Wisdom, and not our shallow fancies.

\* Judges 17.

God requires a cheerfulness in his service, especially under the Gospel, where he sits upon a Throne of Grace; discovers himself in his amiableness, and acts the Covenant of Grace, and the sweet relation of a Father. The Priests of old were not to sully themselves with any sorrow, when they were in the exercise of their functions. God put a bar to the natural affections of *Aaron* and his Sons, when *Nadab* and *Abihu* had been cut off by a severe hand of God\*. Every true Christian in a higher order of Priest-hood, is a person dedicated to joy and peace, offering himself a lively Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving: And there is no Christian duty, but is to be set off and seasoned with cheerfulness: He that loves a cheerful Giver in acts of Charity, requires no less a cheerful Spirit in acts of Worship: As this is an ingredient in worship, so it is the means to make your Spirits intent in worship. When the heart triumphs in the consideration of Divine excellency and goodness, it will be angry at any thing that offer to jogg and disturb it.

\* Lev. 10. 6.

8. *Spiritual worship is to be performed, though with a delight in God; yet with a deep reverence of God.* The Gospel in advancing the spirituality of worship, takes off the terror, but not the reverence of God; which is nothing else in its own nature, but a due and high esteem of the excellency of a thing according to the nature of it: And therefore the Gospel presenting us with more illustrious notices of the glorious nature of God, is so far from indulging any disesteem of him, that it requires of us a greater reverence suitable to the height of its discovery, above what could be spell'd in the Book of Creation: The Gospel worship is therefore exprest by trembling, *Hos.* 11. 10. *They shall walk after the Lord; he shall roar like a Lion; when he shall*  
roar,



roar, then the Children shall tremble from the West. When the Lion of the Tribe of Judah shall lift up his powerful voice in the Gospel, the Western Gentiles shall run trembling to walk after the Lord. God hath alway attended his greatest manifestations with remarkable Characters of Majesty, to create a reverence in his Creature: He caused the wind to March before him; to cut the Mountain, when he manifested himself to *Elijah*, 1 Kings 19. 11. A Wind and a Cloud of Fire, before that magnificent Vision to *Ezekiel*, Ezek. 1. 4, 5. Thunders and Lightnings before the giving the Law, *Exod.* 19. 18. And a mighty wind before the giving the Spirit, *Acts* 2. God requires of us an awe of him in the very act of performance. The Angels are pure, and cannot fear him as Sinners, but in reverence they cover their Faces when they stand before him\*: His power should make us reverence him, as we are Creatures; His Justice as we are Sinners; His goodness as we are restored Creatures. \* [ God is clothed with unspeakable Majesty; the glory of his face shines brighter than the Lights of Heaven in their beauty. Before him the Angels tremble, and the Heavens melt; we ought not therefore to come before him with the Sacrifice of Fools, nor tender a duty to him, without falling low upon our faces, and bowing the knees of our hearts in token of reverence. ] Not a slavish fear, like that of Devils; but a Godly fear, like that of Saints\*, joyned with a sense of an unmoveable Kingdom becometh us: And this the *Apostle* calls a grace necessary to make our service acceptable: And therefore the grace necessary to make it spiritual, since nothing finds admision to God, but what is of a spiritual nature. The consideration of his glorious nature, should imprint an awful respect upon our Souls to him: His goodness should make his Majesty more adorable to us, as his Majesty makes his goodness more admirable in his condescensions to us. As God is a Spirit, our worship must be spiritual; and being he is the supream Spirit, our worship must be reverential: We must observe the State he takes upon him in his Ordinances; He is in Heaven, we upon the Earth; we must not therefore be hasty to utter any thing before God, *Eccles.* 5. 7. Consider him a Spirit in the highest Heavens, and our selves Spirits dwelling in a dreggy Earth. Loose and garish frames debase him to our own quality: Slight postures of Spirit, intimate him to be a slight and mean Being: Our being in Covenant with him, must not lower our awful apprehensions of him: As he is the Lord thy God, 'tis a glorious and fearful Name, or wonderful\*: Though he lay by his Justice to Believers, he doth not lay by his Majesty: When we have a confidence in him, because he is the Lord our God; we must have awful thoughts of his Majesty, because his name is glorious. God is terrible from his Holy-places, in regard of the great things he doth for his *Israel*\*: We should behave our selves with that inward honour and respect of him, as if he were present to our bodily eyes: The higher apprehensions we have of his Majesty, the greater awe will be upon our hearts in his presence, and the greater spirituality in our acts. We should manage our hearts so, as if we had a view of God in his heavenly glory.

\* Isa. 6. 2.

\* *Davill's Sur.* 3. Jean. P. 150.

\* Heb. 12. 28

\* *Deut.* 28. 58.

\* *Psal.* 68. 35.

9. *Spiritual Worship is to be performed with Lumility in our Spirits.* This is to follow upon the reverence of God. As we are to have high thoughts of God, that we may not debase him; we must have low thoughts of our selves, not to vaunt before him. When we have right notions of the Divine Majesty; we shall be as Worms in our own thoughts, and creep as Worms into his presence: We can never consider him in his Glory, but we have a fit opportunity to reflect upon our selves, and consider how basely we revolted from him, and how graciously we are restored by him. As the Gospel affords us greater discoveries of Gods nature, and so enhaunceth our reverence of him; so it helps us to a fuller understanding of our own vileness and weakness, and therefore is proper to ingender Humility: The more spiritual and evangelical therefore any service is, the more humble it is. That is a spiritual service, that doth most manifest the glory of God; and this cannot be manifested by us, without manifesting our own emptiness and nothingness. The Heathens were sensible of the necessity of Humility by the Light of Nature\*; after the Name of God signified by *ΕΙ* inscribed on the Temple at *Delphos*, followed *τις οὐρανός* whereby was insinuated, that when we have to do with God, who is the only *Ens*, we should behave our selves with a sense of our own infirmity, and infinite distance from him. As a person, so a duty leavened with Pride, hath nothing of sincerity, and therefore nothing of spirituality in it, *Hab.* 2. 4. His Soul which is lifted up, is

\* *Plutarch Mor.* tal. P. 344.

is set,



not upright in him. The Elders that were crowned by God to be Kings and Priests, to offer spiritual Sacrifices; uncrown themselves in their worship of him, and cast down their Ornaments at his feet\*: The Greek word to worship προσκυνεω signifies to creep like a Dog upon his belly before his Master; to lye low. How deep should our sense be of the priviledge of Gods admitting us to his worship, and affording us such a mercy under our deserts of wrath? How mean should be our thoughts, both of our persons and performances? How patiently should we wait upon God for the success of worship? How did Abraham the Father of the Faithful, equal himself to the Earth, when he supplicated the God of Heaven, and devote himself to him under the title of very Dust and Ashes? Isaiah did but behold an Evangelical Apparition of God and the Angels worshipping him, and presently reflects upon his own uncleanness\*. Gods presence both requires and causes Humility. How lowly is David in his own opinion, after a magnificent duty performed by himself and his people? 1 Chron. 29. 14. Who am I? And what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly? The more spiritual the Soul is in its carriage to God, the more humble it is; and the more gracious God is in his communications to the Soul, the lower it lies.

God commanded not the fiercer Creatures to be offered to him in Sacrifices, but Lambs and Kids, meek and lowly Creatures; none that had stings in their tails, or venom in their tongues\*. The meek Lamb was the daily Sacrifice: The Doves were to be offered by Pairs: God would not have Hony mixed with any Sacrifice, Levit. 2. 11. That breeds Choler, and Choler Pride; but Oyle, he commanded to be used; that supples and mollifies the parts. Swelling Pride, and boiling Passions render our services carnal; they cannot be spiritual, without an humble sweetness and an innocent sincerity: One grain of this transcends the most costly Sacrifices. A Centrite Heart puts a gloss upon Worship\*. The departure of men and Angels from God, began in Pride; Our approaches and return to him must begin in Humility: And therefore all those Graces which are bottom'd on Humility, must be acted in worship, as Faith, and a sense of our own indigence. Our blessed Saviour, the most spiritual Worshipper, prostrated himself in the Garden with the greatest lowliness, and offered himself upon the Cross a Sacrifice with the greatest humility. Melted Souls in worship, have the most spiritual conformity to the person of Christ in the state of humiliation, and his design in that state: As worship without it is not sutable to God, so neither is it advantageous for us. A time of worship, is a time of Gods Communication. The Vessel must be melted to receive the Mould it is designed for: Softned wax is fittest to receive a stamp, and a spiritually melted Soul fittest to receive a spiritual impression. We cannot perform duty in an evangelical and spiritual strain, without the meltingness and meanness in our selves which the Gospel requires.

10. *Spiritual worship is to be performed with Holiness.* God is a holy Spirit; a likeness to God must attend the worshipping of God as he is: Holiness is alway in season; It becomes his house for ever\*. We can never serve the living God, till we have Consciences purged from dead works, Heb. 9. 14. Dead works in our Consciences, are unsutable to God, an eternal living Spirit. The more mortified the heart, the more quickned the service. Nothing can please an infinite Purity, but that which is pure: Since God is in his Glory, in his Ordinances; we must not be in our Filthiness. The Holiness of his Spirit doth sparkle in his Ordinances; The holiness of our Spirits ought also to sparkle in our observance of them. The Holiness of God is most celebrated in the worship of Angels\*: Spiritual worship ought to be like Angelical: That cannot be with Souls totally impure. As there must be perfect holiness to make a worship perfectly spiritual; so there must be some degree of holiness to make it in any measure spiritual. God would have all the Utensils of the Sanctuary employed about his service to be holy: The Inwards of the Sacrifice were to be rinsed thrice\*. The Crop and Feathers of sacrificed Doves, was to be hung Eastward towards the entrance of the Temple, at a distance from the Holy of Holies where the presence of God was most eminent\*. When Aaron was to go into the Holy of Holies, he was to sanctifie himself in an extraordinary manner\*. The Priests were to be bare footed in the Temple, in the exercise of their Office; shoes alway were to be put off upon holy ground: Look to thy foot when thou goest to the House of God,

\* Revel. 4. 1.  
compared with  
5. and the 1.

\* Gen. 18. 27.

\* Isa. 6. 5.

\* Caudam aculeatam et  
linguam nigram  
Alexand. ab  
Alex. l. 3. c. 12.

\* Psal. 51. 16, 17

\* Psal. 51. 5.

\* Isa. 6. 3.  
Revel. 4. 8.

\* As the Jewish  
Doctors observe  
on Lev. 1. 6.  
\* Lev. 1. 15.  
\* Lev. 15. 4.



God, faith the wise man, *Ecclef. 5. 1.* Strip the affections, the feet of the Soul, of all the dirt contracted; discard all earthly and base thoughts from the heart. A Beast was not to touch the *Mount Sinai*, without losing his Life: Nor can we come near the Throne with brutish affections, without losing the life and fruit of the worship. An unholy Soul degrades himself from a Spirit to a Brute, and the worship from spiritual to brutish. If any unmortified sin be found in the Life, as it was in the comers to the Temple, It taints and pollutes the *Worship*\*. All worship is an acknowledgment of the excellency of God as he is *holy*: Hence it is called a *sanctifying Gods Name*: How can any person sanctifie Gods Name, that hath not a holy resemblance to his Nature? If he be not holy as he is holy, he cannot worship him according to his excellency in Spirit and in Truth: No worship is spiritual wherein we have not a communion with God. But what intercourse can there be between a holy God, and an impure Creature; between Light and Darknes? We have no fellowship with him in any service, unless we *walk in the Light*, in service and out of service, as he is Light\*. The Heathen thought not their Sacrifices agreeable to God, without washing their hands, whereby they signified the preparation of their hearts, before they made the Oblation: Clean hands without a pure heart, signify nothing: The frame of our hearts must answer the purity of the outward Symbols. *Psal. 26. 6. I will wash my hands in Innocence, so will I compass thine Altar, oh Lord*: He would observe the appointed Ceremonies, but not without *cleansing his heart as well as his hands*. Vain Man is apt to rest upon outward acts and rites of worship: But this must alway be practised: The words are in the present Tense, *I wash, I compass*. Purity in worship ought to be our continual Care. If we would perform a spiritual service, wherein we would have communion with God, it must be in *Holiness*: If we would walk with Christ, it must be in *white*\*; alluding to the white Garments the Priests put on, when they went to perform their service: As without this we cannot see God in Heaven, so neither can we see the beauty of God in his own Ordinances.

11. *Spiritual worship is performed with spiritual ends, with raised aims at the glory of God.* No duty can be spiritual that hath a carnal aim: Where God is the sole Object, he ought to be the principal End: In all our actions he is to be our End, as he is the principle of our Being; much more in Religious Acts, as he is the Object of our worship. The worship of God in Scripture, is express by the *seeking of him*\*; *Him*, not our selves; all is to be referred to God. As we are *not to live to our selves*, that being the sign of a carnal state; so we are not to worship for our selves, *Rom. 14. 7, 8.* As all actions are denominated good from their end, as well as their object; so upon the same account they are denominated spiritual. The end spiritualizeth our natural actions; much more our religious: Then are our faculties devoted to him when they center in him. If the intention be evil, there is nothing but darkness in the whole service, *Luke 11. 34.* The first institution of the *Sabbath*, the solemn day for worship, was to contemplate the glory of God in his stupendous works of Creation, and render him a homage for them, *Revel. 4. 11. Thou art worthy oh Lord, to receive Honour, Glory and Power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* No worship can be returned, without a glorifying of God; and we cannot actually glorify him, without direct aims at the promoting his honour. As we have immediately to do with God, so we are immediately to mind the praise of God. As we are not to content our selves with habitual grace, but be rich in the exercise of it in worship; so we are not to acquiesce in habitual aims at the glory of God, without the actual outflowings of our hearts in those aims.

'Tis natural for Man to worship God for *self*: Self-righteousness is the rooted aim of Man in his worship since his revolt from God, and being sensible it is not to be found in his natural actions, he speaks for it in his moral and religious. By the first Pride we flung God off from being our Sovereign, and from being our end; since, a Pharisaical Spirit struts it in nature, not only to do things to be seen of men, but to be admired by God, *Isa. 58. 3. Wherefore have we fasted and thou takest no knowledge?* This is to have God worship them, instead of being worshipped by them. *Cain's* carriage after his Sacrifice, testified some base end in his worship; he came not to God as a Subject to a Sovereign, but as if he had been the Sovereign, and God



the Subject; and when his design is not answered, and his desire not gratified, he proves more a Rebel to God, and a Murderer of his Brother. Such base scents will rise up in our worship from the body of death which cleaves to us, and mix themselves with our services, as Weeds with the Fish in the Net. *David* therefore, after his People had offered willingly to the Temple, begs of God, that their hearts might be prepared to him\*; that their hearts might stand right to God, without any squinting to self-ends.

\* 1 Cron. 29. 12.

Some present themselves to God, as poor men offer a present to a great person; not to honour him, but to gain for themselves a reward richer than their gift. *What profit is it that we have kept his Ordinance, &c?* Mal. 3. 14. Some worship him, intending thereby to make him amends for the wrong they have done him; wipe off their scores, and satisfy their debts; as though a spiritual wrong could be recompensed with a bodily service, and an infinite Spirit be outwitted and appeased by a carnal flattery. *Self* is the Spirit of Carnality: To pretend a homage to God, and intend only the advantage of self, is rather to mock him, than worship him. When we believe that we ought to be satisfied, rather than God glorified; we set God below ourselves, imagin that he should submit his own honour to our advantage: We make our selves more glorious than God, as though we were not made for him, but he hath a Being only for us; this is to have a very low esteem of the Majesty of God. Whatsoever any man aims at in worship above the glory of God, that he forms as an Idol to himself instead of God, and sets up a Golden-Image: God counts not this as a Worship. The Offerings made in the Wilderness for forty years together, God esteemed as not offered to him, *Amos* 5. 25. *Have you offered to me Sacrifices and Offerings in the Wilderness forty years, oh House of Israel?* They did it not to God, but to themselves; for their own security, and the attainment of the possession of the promised Land. A spiritual Worshipper performs not worship for some hopes of carnal advantage; he uses ordinances as means to bring God and his Soul together; to be more fitted to honour God in the world, in his particular place: When he hath been inflamed and humble in any address or duty, he gives God the glory; his heart sutes the doxology at the end of the Lords-prayer, ascribes the Kingdom, Power and Glory to God alone; and if any viper of Pride starts out upon him, he endeavours presently to shake it off. That which was the first end of our framing, ought to be the chief end of our acting towards God: But when men have the same ends in worship as Brutes, the satisfaction of a sensitive part; the service is no more than brutish. The acting for a sensitive end, is unworthy of the Majesty of God to whom we address, and unbecoming a rational Creature. The acting for a sensitive end, is not a rational, much less can it be a spiritual service; though the Act may be good in it self, yet not good in the Agent, because he wants a due end: We are then spiritual, when we have the same end in our redeemed services, as God had in his redeeming love, viz. his own Glory.

12. *Spiritual service is offered to God in the name of Christ.* Those are only *spiritual Sacrifices*, that are offered up to God by *Jesus Christ*\*; that are the fruits of the Sanctification of the Spirit, and offered in the mediation of the Son: As the Altar sanctifies the gift, so doth Christ spiritualize our services for Gods acceptance; as the Fire upon the Altar separated the airy and finer parts of the sacrifice from the terrene and earthly: This is the *Golden Altar* upon which the Prayers of the Saints are offered up before the *Throne*\*. As all that we have from God streams through his blood: so all that we give to God ascends by vertue of his merits. All the blessings God gave to the *Israelites* came out of *Sion*\*, that is, from the Gospel hid under the Law; all the duties we present to God are to be presented in *Sion*, in an evangelical manner: All our worship must be bottomed on Christ. God hath intended that we should honour the Son as we honour the Father: As we honour the Father by offering our service only to him, so we are to honour the Son by offering it only in his name: In him alone God is well pleased, because in him alone he finds our services spiritual and worthy of acceptance: We must therefore take fast hold of him with our Spirits, and the faster we hold him, the more spiritual is our worship. To do any thing in the name of Christ, is not to believe the worship shall be accepted for it self, but to have our eye fixed upon Christ for the acceptance of it, and not to rest upon the work done as carnal people are apt to do. The Creatures present their acknowledgments

\* 1 Pet. 2. 5.

\* Revel. 8. 3.

\* Psal. 134. 3.  
The Lord bless  
thee out of Sion.



ledgments to God by Man ; and man can only present his by Christ. It was utterly unlawful after the building of the Temple, to sacrifice any where else : The Temple being a type of Christ, it is utterly unlawful for us to present our services in any other name than his.

This is the way to be spiritual. If we consider God out of Christ, we can have no other notions but those of horror and bondage. We behold him a Spirit, but environ'd with Justice and Wrath for Sinners : But the consideration of him in Christ, veils his Justice ; draws forth his Mercy ; represents him more a Father than a Judge. In Christ the aspect of Justice is changed, and by that the temper of the Creature ; so that in and by this Mediator, we can have a spiritual boldness, and access to God with confidence\* ; whereby the Spirit is kept from benumbedness, and distraction ; and our Souls quickned and refined. The thoughts kept upon Christ in a duty of worship, quickly elevates the Soul, and spiritualizeth the whole service. Sin makes our services black, and the blood of Christ makes both our persons and services white.

\* Eph. 3. 12.

To conclude this Head.

God is a Spirit infinitely happy, therefore we must approach to him with cheerfulness ; He is a Spirit of infinite Majesty, therefore we must come before him with reverence ; He is a Spirit infinitely high, therefore we must offer up our Sacrifices with the deepest humility ; He is a Spirit infinitely holy, therefore we must address with purity ; He is a Spirit infinitely glorious, we must therefore acknowledge his excellency in all that we do, and in our measures contribute to his glory, by having the highest aims in his worship ; He is a Spirit infinitely provoked by us, therefore we must offer up our worship in the name of a pacifying Mediator and Intercessour.

3. The third general, is why a spiritual worship is due to God, and to be offered to him. We must consider the Object of Worship, and the Subject of worship ; the Worshipper and the Worshipped. God is a spiritual Being ; Man is a reasonable Creature. The nature of God informs us, what is fit to be presented to him ; our own nature informs us, what is fit to be presented by us.

Reason 1. The best we have is to be presented to God in worship. For

1. Since God is the most excellent Being, he is to be served by us with the most excellent thing we have, and with the choicest veneration. God is so incomprehensibly excellent, that we cannot render him what he deserves ; We must render him what we are able to offer ; the best of our affections ; the flower of our strength ; the Cream and Top of our Spirits. By the same reason that we are bound to give to God the best worship, we must offer it to him in the best manner. We cannot give to God any thing too good for so blessed a Being : God being a great King, slight services become not his Majesty\* : 'Tis unbecoming the Majesty of God, and the reason of a Creature, to give him a trivial thing : 'Tis unworthy to bestow the best of our strength on our Lust, and the worst and weakest in the service of God. An infinite Spirit, should have affections as near to infinite as we can : As he is a Spirit without bounds, so he should have a service without limits : When we have given him all, we cannot serve him according to the excellency of his nature\* ; and shall we give him less than all ? His infinite excellency and our dependance on him as Creatures, demands the choicest adoration : Our Spirits being the noblest part of our nature, are as due to him, as the service of our bodies which are the vilest : To serve him with the worst only, is to diminish his honour.

\* Mal. 1. 13, 14.

\* Josh. 24. 19.

2. Under the Law, God commanded the best to be offered him. He would have the Males, the best of the kind ; the fat, the best of the Creature\* : He commanded them to offer him the Firstlings of the flock ; not the Firstlings of the Womb, but the Firstlings of the Year : The Jewish Cattle having two breeding times, in the beginning of the Spring, and the beginning of September ; The latter breed was the weaker which Jacob knew\*, when he laid the Rods before the Cattle when they were strong in the Spring, and withheld them when they were feeble in the Autumn. One reason ( as the Jews say ) why God accepted not the offering of Cain was, because he brought the meanest, not the best of the fruit ; and therefore 'tis said, only that he brought of the fruit of the Ground, Gen. 4. 3. not the first of the fruit, or the best of the fruit ; as Abel who brought the Firstling of his Flock, and the Fat thereof, v. 4.

\* Exod. 29. 17.  
The inward fat  
not the of-fats.

\* Gen. 30.



3. *And this the Heathen practiced by the light of Nature.* They for the most part offered Males, as being more worthy; and burnt the Male, not the Female Frankincense, as it is divided into those two kinds: They offered the best, when they offered their Children to *Molech*. Nothing more excellent than Man, and nothing dearer to Parents than their Children, which are parts of themselves. When the *Israelites* would have a Golden-Calf for a representation of God, they would dedicate their Jewels, and strip their Wives and Children of their richest Ornaments, to shew their devotion. Shall men serve their dumb Idols with the best of their substance, and the strength of their Souls; and shall the living God have a duller service from us, than Idols had from them? God requires no such hard, but delightful worship from us, our spirits.

4. *All Creatures serve Man, by the providential order of God, with the best they have.* As we by Gods appointment receive from Creatures the best they can give, ought we not with a free will render to God the best we can offer? The Beasts give us their best Fat; the Trees their best Fruit; the Sun its best Light; the Fountains their best Streams: Shall God order us the best from Creatures, and we put him off with the worst from our selves?

5. *God hath given us the choicest thing he had.* A Redeemer that was the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God: The best he had in Heaven, his own Son, and in himself, a Sacrifice for us, that we might be enabled to present our selves a Sacrifice to Him. And Christ offered himself for us, the best he had, and that with the strength of the Deity through the *Eternal Spirit*; and shall we grudge God the best part of our selves? As God would have a worship from his Creature, so it must be with the best part of his Creature. If we have *given our selves to the Lord*<sup>\*</sup>, we can worship with no less than our selves. What is the Man without his Spirit? If we are to worship God with all that we have received from him, we must worship him with the best part we have received from him: 'Tis but a small glory we can give him with the best, and shall we deprive him of his right by giving him the worst? As what we are, is from God; so what we are, ought to be for God. Creation is the foundation of worship, *Psal. 100. 2, 3. Serve the Lord with gladness: Know ye that the Lord he is God; 'tis he that hath made us*: He hath ennobled us with spiritual affections; where is it fittest for us to employ them, but upon him? and at what time, but when we come solemnly to converse with him? Is it Justice to deny him the honour of his best gift to us? Our Souls are more his gift to us, than any thing in the World: Other things are so given that they are often taken from us, but our Spirits are the most durable gift. Rational faculties cannot be removed without a dissolution of nature.

\* 2 Cor. 2. 5.

\* *Amys aut. Mor.*  
Tom. 2. P. 311.

Well then<sup>\*</sup>; As he is God, he is to be honoured with all the propensions and ardor that the infiniteness and excellency of such a Being requires, and the incomparable obligations he hath laid upon us in this state deserve at our hands: In all our worship therefore, our minds ought to be filled with the highest admiration, love and reverence. Since our end was to glorifie God, we answer not our end, and honour him not, unless we give him the choicest we have.

Reason 2. *We cannot else act towards God according to the nature of rational Creatures.* Spiritual worship is due to God, because of his nature; and due from us, because of our nature. As we are to adore God, so we are to adore him as men: The nature of a rational Creature makes this impression upon him: He cannot view his own nature without having this duty striking upon his mind. As he knows by inspection into himself, that there was a God that made him; so, that he is made to be in subjection to God; subjection to him in his Spirit as well as his Body, and ought morally to testify this natural dependance on him: His constitution informs him, that he hath a capacity to converse with God; that he cannot converse with him, but by those inward faculties: If it could be managed by his Body without his Spirit, Beasts might as well converse with God as Men. It can never be a *reasonable service* as it ought to be<sup>\*</sup>, unless the reasonable faculties be employed in the management of it: It must be a worship prodigiously lame, without the concurrence of the cheifest part of Man with it. As we are to act conformably to the nature of the object, so also to the nature of our own faculties. Our faculties in the very gift of them to us were destined to be exercised; about what? What? All other things but the Au-

\* Rom. 12. 1.

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thor of them: 'Tis a conceit cannot enter into the heart of a rational Creature, that he should act as such a Creature in other things, and as a stone in things relating to the Donor of them; as a man, with his mind about him in the affairs of the world, as a Beast without reason in his acts towards God. If a man did not employ his reason in other things, he would be an unprofitable Creature in the world: If he do not employ his spiritual faculties in worship, he denies them the proper end and use for which they were given him; 'tis a practical denial that God hath given him a Soul, and that God hath any right to the exercise of it. If there were no worship appointed by God in the world, the natural inclination of man to some kind of Religion would be in vain; and if our inward faculties were not employed in the duties of Religion, they would be in vain: The true end of God in the endowment of us with them would be defeated by us, as much as lies in us, if we did not serve him with that which we have from him solely at his own cost. As no man can with reason conclude, that the Rest commanded on the *Sabbath* and the Sanctification of it, was only a rest of the body; that had been performed by the Beasts as well as Men; but some higher end was aimed at for the rational Creature: So no man can think that the Command for worship, terminated only in the presence of the Body; that God should give the Command to Man as a reasonable Creature, and expect no other service from him than that of a Brute.

God did not require a worship from man, for any want he had, or any essential honour that could accrue to him; but that men might testify their gratitude to him, and dependance on him. 'Tis the most horrid ingratitude, not to have lively and deep sentiments of gratitude after such obligations, and not to make those due acknowledgments that are proper for a rational Creature. Religion is the highest and choicest act of a reasonable Creature: No Creature under Heaven is capable of it that wants reason. As it is a violation of reason not to worship God, so it is no less a violation of reason not to worship him with the Heart and Spirit: It is a high dishonour to God, and defeats him not only of the service due to him from Man, but that which is due to him from all the Creatures. Every Creature, as it is an effect of Gods Power and Wisdom, doth passively worship God; that is, it doth afford matter of adoration to man that hath reason to collect it and return it where it is due: Without the exercise of the Soul we can no more hand it to God, than without such an exercise we can gather it from the Creature: So that by this neglect, the Creatures are restrained from answering their chief end; they cannot pay any service to God without man; nor can man without the employment of his rational faculties, render a homage to God, any more than beasts can. This engagement of our inward power stands firm and unviolable, let the modes of worship be what they will, or the changes of them by the Sovereign Authority of God never so frequent; this could not expire or be changed, as long as the nature of Man endured. As Man had not been capable of a Command for Worship, unless he had been endued with spiritual faculties; so he is not active in a true practice of Worship, unless they be employed by him in it. The constitution of Man makes this manner of worship perpetually obligatory; and the oblation can never cease, till man cease to be a Creature furnished with such faculties: In our worship therefore, if we would act like rational Creatures, we should extend all the powers of our Souls to the utmost pitch, and essay to have apprehensions of God, equal to the excellency of his Nature, which though we may attempt, we can never attain.

Reason 3. *Without this engagement of our Spirits, no act is an act of worship.* True worship being an acknowledgment of God and the perfections of his Nature, results only from the Soul, that being only capable of knowing God and those perfections, which are the object and motive of worship: The posture of the body, is but to testify the inward temper and affection of the mind: If therefore it testifies what it is not, 'tis a lye and no worship: The cringes a Beast may be taught to make to an Altar, may as well be called Worship; since a man thinks as little of that God he pretends to honour, as the beast doth of the Altar to which he bowes. Worship is a reverent remembrance of God, and giving some honour to him with the intention of the Soul: It cannot justly have the name of Worship, that wants the essential part of it: 'Tis an ascribing to God the glory of his Nature, an owning subjection and obedience to him as our sovereign Lord: This is as impossible to be performed  
without



without the Spirit, as that there can be life and motion in a body without a Soul: 'Tis a drawing near to God, not in regard of his essential presence; so all things are near to God; but in an acknowledgement of his excellency, which is an act of the Spirit; *without this, the worst of men in a place of worship, are as near to God as the best.* The necessity of the conjunction of our Soul, ariseth from the nature of worship; which being the most serious thing we can be employed in, the highest converse with the highest object, requires the choicest temper of Spirit in the performance. That cannot be an act of worship, which is not an act of Piety and Virtue; but there is no act of virtue done by the members of the Body, without the concurrence of the Powers of the Soul. We may as well call the presence of a dead Carcass in a place of worship, an act of Religion, as the presence of a living body without an intent Spirit: The separation of the Soul from one is natural, the other moral; that renders the body lifeless, but this renders the act loathsome to God: As the being of the Soul gives life to the Body, so the operation of the Soul gives life to the actions: As he cannot be a man that wants the form of a man, a rational Soul; so that cannot be a worship that wants an essential part, the act of the Spirit: God will not vouchsafe any acts of man so noble a title, without the requisite qualifications, *Hos. 5. 6. They shall go with their Flocks and their Herds, to seek the Lord, &c.* A multitude of Lambs and Bullocks for Sacrifice, to appease Gods Anger: God would not give it the title of worship, though instituted by himself, when it wanted the qualities of such a service: The spirit of Whoredom was in the midst of them, *v. 4.* In the judgment of our Savior, it is a *vain worship, when the Traditions of Men are taught for the Doctrins of God\**; and no less vain must it be, when the Bodies of Men are presented to supply the place of their Spirits. As an omission of duty is a contempt of Gods Sovereign Authority, so the omission of the manner of it, is a contempt of it, and of his amiable excellency; and that which is a contempt and mockery, can lay no just claim to the title of Worship.

\* Mat. 15. 9.

Reason 4. *There is in worship, an approach of God to Man.* It was instituted to this purpose, that God might give out his blessings to Man: And ought not our Spirits to be prepared and ready to receive his communications? We are in such acts, more peculiarly in his presence. In the *Israelites* hearing the Law, it is said God was to *come among them\**: Then, men are said to stand before the Lord\*: *God before whom I stand*, that is, whom I worship: And therefore when *Cain* forsook the worship of God settled in his Fathers Family, he is said to *go out from the presence of the Lord*, *Gen. 4. 16.* God is essentially present in the world; graciously present in his Church. The name of the Evangelical City is, *Jehovah Shammah\**, *the Lord is there.* God is more graciously present in the Evangelical institutions, than in the Legal: *He loves the Gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob\**: His Evangelical Law and Worship which was to go forth from *Zion*, as the other did from *Sinai*, *Mic. 4. 2.* God delights to approach to Men, and converse with them in the worship instituted in the Gospel, more than in all the dwellings of *Jacob*. If God be graciously present, ought not we to be spiritually present? A lifeless Carcass service, becomes not so high and delectable a presence as this: 'Tis to thrust him from us, not invite him to us: 'Tis to practise in the Ordinances, what the Prophet predicts concerning mens usage of our Saviour, *Isa. 53. 2. There is no form, no comeliness, nor beauty that we should desire him.* A slowness in worship, reflects upon the excellency of the object of worship. God and his worship are so linkt together, that whosoever thinks the one not worth his inward care, esteems the other not worth his inward affection. How unworthy a slight is it of God, who profers the opening his Treasure; the reimpresing his Image; conferring his blessings; admits us into his presence, when he hath no need for us, who hath millions of Angels to attend him in his Court, and celebrate his Praise? He that worships not God with his Spirit, regards not Gods presence in his Ordinances, and slights the great end of God in them, and that perfection he may attain by them. We can only expect, what God hath promised to give, when we tender to him what he hath commanded us to present. If we put off God with a Shell, he will put us off with a Husk. How can we expect his heart, when we do not give him ours; or hope for the blessing needful for us, when we render not the glory due to him? It cannot be an

\* Exod. 19.

10. 11.

\* Deut. 10. 8.

\* Kings 1. 17.

\* Ezek. 48. 35.

\* Psal. 87. 2.

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advantageous worship, without spiritual graces; for those are uniting, and Union is the ground of all Communion.

Reason 5. *To have a spiritual worship is Gods end in the restoration of the Creature; both in Redemption by his Son, and Sanctification by his Spirit.* A fitness for spiritual Offerings, was the end of the coming of Christ\*; He should purge them, as Gold and Silver by Fire, a Spirit burning up their dross, melting them into a holy compliance with and submission to God: To what purpose? That they may offer to the Lord an Offering in Righteousness; a pure Offering from a purified Spirit: He came to bring us to God\* in such a Garb, as that we might be fit to converse with him: Can we be thus, without a fixedness of our Spirits on him? \* Mal. 3. 3. \* 1 Pet. 3. 13.

The offering of spiritual Sacrifices, is the end of making any a spiritual Habitation, and a holy Priest-hood\*. We can no more be Worshippers of God, without a Worshippers nature, than a man can be a man without humane nature. As man was at first created for the honour and worship of God; so the design of restoring that Image which was defaced by Sin, tends to the same end. We are not brought to God by Christ, nor are our services presented to him, if they be without our Spirits: Would any man that undertakes to bring another to a Prince, introduce him in a slovenly and sordid habit, such a garb that he knows hateful to him? Or bring the Clothes or Skin of a Man stuff with straw, instead of the Person? To come with our Skins before God without our Spirits, is contrary to the design of God, in Redemption and Regeneration. \* 1 Pet. 2. 5.

If a carnal worship would have pleased God, a carnal heart would have served his turn, without the expence of his Spirit in Sanctification: He bestows upon man a spiritual nature, that he may return to him a spiritual service: He enlightens the Understanding, that he may have a rational service; and new moulds the Will, that he may have a voluntary service. As it is the Milk of the Word wherewith he feeds us, so it is the service of the Word wherewith we must glorify him. So much as there is of confusion in our understanding, so much of starting and levity in our Wills; so much of slipperiness and skipping in our affections; so much is abated of the due qualities of the worship of God; and so much we fall short of the end of Redemption and Sanctification.

Reason 6. *A spiritual worship is to be offered to God, because no worship but that can be acceptable.* We can never be secured of acceptance without it; He being a Spirit, nothing but the worship in Spirit can be suitable to him: What is unsuitable, cannot be acceptable: There must be something in us, to make our services capable of being presented by Christ for an actual acceptation. No service is acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, but as it is a spiritual Sacrifice, and offered by a spiritual heart, 1 Pet. 2. 5. The Sacrifice is first spiritual, before it be acceptable to God by Christ: When it is an offering in righteousness, it is then, and only then pleasant to the Lord, Mal. 3. 3, 4. No Prince would accept a gift that is unsuitable to his Majesty, and below the condition of the person that presents it: Would he be pleased with a bottle of water for drink, from one that hath his Cellar full of wine? How unacceptable must that be, that is unsuitable to the Divine Majesty? And what can be more unsuitable, than a withdrawing the operations of our Souls from him, in the oblation of our Bodies? We as little glorify God as God, when we give him only a corporeal worship; as the Heathen did, when they represented him in a corporeal shape\*; one as well as the other denies his spiritual nature: This is worse, for had it been lawful to represent God to the eye, it could not have been done, but by a bodily figure suited to the sense; but since it is necessary to worship him, it cannot be by a corporeal attendance, without the operation of the Spirit. A spiritual frame is more pleasing to God, than the highest exterior adornments; than the greatest gifts, and the highest Prophetical illuminations. The glory of the second Temple exceeded the glory of the first\*: As God accounts the spiritual glory of Ordinances most beneficial for us, so our spiritual attendance upon Ordinances is most pleasing to him; He that offers the greatest services without it, offers but flesh, Hos. 8. 13. They sacrifice Flesh for the Sacrifices of my Offerings, but the Lord accepts them not. Spiritual frames are the Soul of Religious services; all other carriages without them, are contemptible to this Spirit: We can never lay claim to that promise of God, none shall seek my face in vain: We affect a vain seeking of him, when we want a due temper of

\* Mal. 3. 3.

\* 1 Pet. 3. 13.

\* 1 Pet. 2. 5.

\* Rom. 1. 21.

\* Hag. 2. 9. 9.



of Spirit for him : And vain Spirits shall have vain returns : 'Tis more contrary to the nature of Gods Holiness to have communion with such, than it is contrary to the nature of Light to have communion with Darknefs.

To make use of this.

Use 1. First it serves for *information*.

1. If spiritual worship be required by God ; *How sad is it for them that are so far from giving God a spiritual worship, that they render him no worship at all ?* I speak not of the neglect of publick, but of private ; when men present not a devotion to God from one years end to the other. The speech of our Saviour, that we must worship God in Spirit and Truth, implies that a worship is due to him from every one : That is the common impression upon the Consciences of all men in the world, if they have not by some constant course in gross sins, hardned their Souls, and stifled those natural sentiments. There was never a Nation in the world, without some kind of Religion ; and no Religion was ever without some modes, to testify a devotion : The *Heathens* had their Sacrifices and Purifications ; and the *Jews* by Gods order had their rites, whereby they were to express their Allegiance to God.

Consider,

1. *Worship is a duty incumbent upon all men.* 'Tis a homage Mankind owes to God, under the relation wherein he stands obliged to him : 'Tis a prime and immutable justice to own our Allegiance to him. 'Tis as unchangeable a truth that God is to be worshipped, as that God is : He is to be worshipped as God ; as Creator ; and therefore by all, since he is the Creator of all, the Lord of all, and *all are his Creatures, and all are his Subjects.* Worship is founded upon Creation, *Psal. 100. 2, 3.* 'Tis due to God for himself and his own essential excellency, and therefore due from all : 'Tis due upon the account of mans nature : The human rational nature is the same in all. Whatsoever is due to God upon the account of mans nature, and the natural obligations he hath laid upon man, is due from all men, because they all enjoy the benefits which are proper to their nature.

Man in no state was exempted, nor can be exempted from it : In *Paradise* he had his Sabbath and Sacraments ; Man therefore dissolves the obligation of a reasonable nature, by neglecting the worship of God.

Religion is in the first place to be minded. As soon as *Noah* came out of the Ark, he contrived not a Habitation for himself, but an *Altar* for the Lord, to acknowledge him the Author of his preservation from the Deluge\* : And wheresoever *Abraham* came, his first business was to erect an *Altar*, and pay his arrears of gratitude to God, before he ran upon the score for new mercies\* ; He left a testimony of worship where ever he came.

2. *Wholly therefore to neglect it, is a high degree of Atheism.* He that calls not upon God, saith in his heart *there is no God* ; and seems to have the sentiments of natural Conscience, as to God, stifled in him\* : It must arise from a conceit that there is no God, or that we are equal to him, adoration not being due from persons of an equal state ; or that God is unable, or unwilling to take notice of the adoring acts of his Creatures : What is any of these but an undeifying the supream Majesty ? When we lay aside all thoughts of paying any homage to him, we are in a fair way opinionatively to deny him, as much as we practically disown him. Where there is no knowledge of God, that is, no *acknowledgment of God*, a gap is opened to all licentiousness\* : And that by degrees brawns the Conscience, and raseth out the sense of God. Those forsake God that *forget his holy Mountain*\* ; They do not practically own him as the Creator of their Souls or bodies. 'Tis the sin of *Cain*, who turning his back upon worship, is said to *go out from the presence of the Lord*\*. Not to worship him with our Spirits, is against his *Law of Creation* : Not to worship him at all, is against his *act of Creation* : Not to worship him in truth is Hypocrisie : Not to worship him at all is Atheism, whereby we render our selves worse than the worms in the Earth, or a toad in a Ditch.

3. *To perform a worship to a false God, or to the true God in a false manner, seems to be less a sin, than to live in perpetual neglects of it.* Though it be directed to a false Object instead of God ; yet it is under the notion of a God, and so is an acknowledgement of such a Being as God in the world ; whereas the total neglect of any worship, is a practical denying of the existence of any supream Majesty.

Who-

\* Gen. 8. 20.

\* Gen. 12. 7.  
Gen. 13. 4. 18.

\* Psal. 14. 1, 4

\* Hof. 4. 1, 2.  
\* Isa. 65. 11.

\* Gen. 4. 16.



Whosoever constantly omits a publick and private worship, transgresses against an universally received dictate; For all Nations have agreed in the common notion of worshipping God, though they have disagreed in the several modes and rites whereby they would testify that adoration. By a worship of God, though superstitious, a veneration and reverence of such a being is maintained in the world; whereas by a total neglect of worship, he is virtually disowned and discarded, if not from his existence, yet from his Providence and Government of the world: All the mercies we breathe in are denied to flow from him. A foolish worship owns Religion, though it belspatters it. As if a stranger coming into a Country mistakes a Subject for the Prince, and pays that reverence to the Subject, which is due to the Prince, though he mistakes the object, yet he owns an Authority; or if he pays any respect to the true Prince of that Country after the mode of his own, though appearing ridiculous in the place where he is, he owns the Authority of the Prince; whereas the omission of all respect would be a contempt of Majesty: And therefore the Judgments of God have been more signal upon the Sacrilegious Contemners of worship among the Heathens, than upon those that were diligent and devout in their false worship; and they generally owned the blessings received, to the preservation of a sense, and worship of a deity among them. Though such a worship be not acceptable to God, and every man is bound to offer to God a devotion agreeable to his own mind; yet it is commendable, not as worship, but as it speaks an acknowledgment of such a Being as God in his power in Creation, and his beneficence in his Providence.

Well then, omissions of worship are to be avoided. Let no man execute that upon himself, which God will pronounce at last as the greatest misery, and bid God depart from him, who will at last be loath to hear God bid him depart from him. Though man hath natural sentiments that God is to be worshipped; yet having an hostility in his nature, he is apt to neglect, or give it him in a slight manner: He therefore sets a particular mark and notice of attention upon the fourth Command, *Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath-day*. Corrupt nature is apt to neglect the worship of God, and flagg in it: This Command therefore which concerns his worship, he fortifies with several reasons.

Nor let any neglect worship, because they cannot find their hearts spiritual in it. The further we are from God, the more carnal shall we be. No man can expect heat by a distance from the Sun beams, or other means of warmth. Though God commanded a *circumcised heart* in the Jewish services; yet he did not warrant a neglect of the outward testimonies of Religion he had then appointed: He expected according to his Command, that they should offer the Sacrifices, and practise the legal Purifications he had commanded; he would have them diligently observed, though he had declared that he imposed them only for a time. And our Saviour ordered the practise of those positive rites as long as the law remained unrepealed, as in the Case of the Leper\*. 'Tis an injustice to refuse the offering our selves to God according to the manner he hath in his Wisdom prescribed and required.

\* Mark 14. 4.

If spiritual worship be required by God; then

2. It informs us, *that diligence in outward worship is not to be rested in*. \* Men may attend all their days on worship, with a juiceless heart and unquickened frame, and think to compensate the neglect of the manner, with abundance of the matter of service. Outward expressions are but the badges and liveries of service, not the service itself. As the strength of Sin lies in the inward frame of the heart, so the strength of worship in the inward complexion and temper of the Soul. What do a thousand services avail, without cutting the throat of our carnal affections? What are loud Prayers, but as sounding Brass and tinkling Cymbals, without Divine Charity? A *Pharisaical* diligence in outward forms without inward Spirit, had no better a title vouchsafed by our Saviour, than that of hypocritical. God desires not Sacrifices, nor delights in burnt Offerings: Shadows are not to be offered instead of Substance. God required the heart of man for it self; but commanded outward Ceremonies, as subservient to inward worship, and goads and spurs unto it: They were never appointed as the substance of Religion, but auxiliaries to it. What value had the Offering of the human nature of Christ been of, if he had not had a divine nature to qualifie him to be the Priest? And what is the oblation of

\* Daille *mélange des Sermons* Ser. 2.



our Bodies, without a Priestly act of the Spirit in the presentation of it? Could the *Israelites* have called themselves Worshippers of God according to his Order, if they had brought a thousand Lambs that had died in a Ditch, or been killed at home? They were to be brought living to the Altar; the blood shed at the foot of it: A thousand Sacrifices killed without, had not been so valuable as one brought alive to the place of Offering: One sound Sacrifice is better than a thousand rotten ones. As God took no pleasure in the blood of Beasts without its relation to the *Antitype*; So he takes no pleasure in the outward rites of worship, without Faith in the Redeemer. To offer a Body with a senseless Spirit, is a Sacrilege of the same nature with that of the *Israelites* when they offered dead Beasts. A man without spiritual worship is *dead* while he worships, though by his diligence in the externals of it he may like the *Angel of the Church of Sardis*, *have a name to live*\*. What security can we expect from a multitude of dead services? What weak shields are they against the holy eye and revenging wrath of God? What man, but one out of his wits, would sollicit a dead man to be his Advocate or Champion?

Diligence in outward worship is not to be rested in.

\* Revel. 3. 1.

*Use 2.* Shall be for *Examination*: *Let us try our selves concerning the manner of our worship.* We are now in the end of the world, and the dreggs of time; wherein the *Apostle* predicts, there may be much of a *form*, and little of the power of *Godliness*\*: And therefore it stands us in hand to search into our selves, whether it be not thus with us? Whether there be as much reverence in our Spirits, as there may be devotion in our countenances and outward carriages.

\* 2 Tim. 3. 1, 5.

1. *How therefore are our hearts prepared to worship?* Is our diligence greater, to put our hearts in an adoring posture, than our bodies in a decent garb? Or are we content to have a muddy Heart, so we may have a drest Carcass? To have a Spirit a Cage of unclean Birds, while we wipe the filth from the outside of the Platter, is no better than a *Pharisaical* devotion, and deserves no better a name, than that of a whited Sepulcher.

Do we take opportunities to excite and quicken our Spirits to the performance, and cry aloud with *David*, *awake, awake my glory*? Are not our hearts asleep when Christ knocks; when we hear the voice of God, *seek my face*; Do we answer him with warm resolutions, *thy face Lord we will seek*\*? Do we comply with spiritual motions, and strike while the Iron is hot? Is there not more of reluctancy, than readiness? Is there a quick rising of the Soul in reverence to the motion, as *Eglon* to *Elud*; or a sullen hanging the head at the first approach of it? Or if our hearts seem to be engaged, and on fire; What are the motives that quicken that fire? Is it only the blast of a natural Conscience; fear of Hell; desires of Heaven as abstracted from God? Or is it an affection to God; an obedient will to please him; longings to enjoy him, as a holy and sanctifying God in his Ordinances, as well as a blessed and glorified God in Heaven?

\* Psal. 27. 8.

What do we expect in our approaches from him? That which may make divine impressions upon us, and more exactly conform us to the divine nature? Or do we design nothing but an empty formality, a rowling eye, and a filling the Air with a few words, without any openings of heart to receive the incomes, which according to the nature of the duty might be conveyed to us? Can this be a spiritual worship? The Soul then *closely waits* upon him, when its *expectation is only from him*, Psal. 62. 6. Are our hearts seasoned with a sense of sin; a sight of our spiritual wants; raised notions of God; glowing affections to Him; strong appetite after a spiritual fulness? Do we rouse up our sleepy Spirits, and make a Covenant with all that is within us to attend upon him? So much as we want of this, so much we come short of a spiritual worship: In Psal. 57. 7. *My heart is fixed, oh God, my heart is fixed.* *David* would fix his heart, before he would engage in a praising act of worship: He appeals to God about it, and that with doubling the expression, as being certain of an inward preparedness: Can we make the same appeals in a fixation of Spirit?

2. *How are our hearts fixed upon him, How do they cleave to him in the duty?* Do we resign our Spirits to God, and make them an intire *Holocaust*, a whole burnt-offering in his worship? Or do we not willingly admit carnal thoughts to mix themselves with spiritual duties, and fasten our minds to the Creature, under pretences of



of directing them to the Creator? Do we not pass a meer complement on God, by some superficial act of devotion; while some covetous, envious, ambitious, voluptuous imagination may possess our minds? Do we not invert Gods Order, and worship a Lust instead of God with our Spirits, that should not have the least service, either from our Souls or Bodies, but with a spiritual disdain be sacrificed to the just indignation of God? How often do we fight against his Will, while we cry hail Master; instead of crucifying our own thoughts, crucifying the Lord of our Lives; Our outward carriage plausible, and our inward stark naught? Do we not often regard iniquity more than God in our hearts, in a time of worship? Roul some filthy imagination as a sweet morsel under our tongues, and taste more sweetness in that, than in God? Do not our Spirits smell rank of Earth, while we offer to Heaven, and have we not hearts full of thick Clay, as their *hands were full of blood*? \* Isa. 1. 15. When we sacrifice, do we not wrap up our Souls in communion with some sordid fancy, when we should entwine our Spirits about an amiable God? While we have some fear of him, may we not have a love to something else above him? This is to worship, or swear by the Lord, and by Malchom\*. How often doth an Apish-fancy \* Zeph. 1. 5. render a service inwardly ridiculous, under a grave outward posture; skipping to the Shop, Ware-house, Compting-house in the space of a short Prayer? And we are before God as a Babel, a confusion of internal languages; and this in those parts of worship which are in the right use most agreeable to God; profitable for our selves; ruinous to the Kingdom of Sin and Satan, and means to bring us into a closer communion with the Divine Majesty: Can this be a spiritual worship?

3. *How do we act our graces in worship?* Though the Instrument be strung, if the strings be not wound up, what melody can be the issue? All readiness and alacrity discover a strength of nature, and a readiness in Spirituall, discovers a spirituality in the heart. As unaffecting thoughts of God are not spiritual thoughts; so unaffecting addresses to God, are not spiritual addresses. Well then, what awakenings, and elevations of Faith and Love have we? What strong outflowings of our souls to him? What indignation against Sin? What admirations of redeeming Grace? How low have we brought our corruptions to the foot-stool of Christ, to be made his conquered Enemies? How straitly have we claspt our Faith about the Cross and Throne of Christ, to become his intimate Spouse? Do we in hearing hang upon the lips of Christ; in prayer take hold of God, and wil not let him go; in confessions rent the Caul of our hearts, and indite our Souls before him with a deep humility? Do we act more by a soaring love than a drooping fear? So far as our Spirits are servile, so far they are legal and carnal; so much as they are free and spontaneous, so much they are evangelical and spiritual. As men under the Law are subject to the constraint of *Bondage*\* \* Heb. 2. 15. all their life-time, in all their worship: so under the Gospel they are under a constraint of love\*: How then are believing affections exercised, which are alway \* 2 Cor. 5. 14. accompanied with holy fear, a fear of his goodness that admits us into his presence, and a fear to offend him in our act of worship? So much as we have of forced or feeble affection, so much we have of carnality.

4. *How do we find our hearts after worship?* By an after carriage, we may judge of the spirituality of it.

1. *How are we as to inward strength?* When a worship is spiritually performed, grace is more strengthened, corruption more mortified: The Soul, like *Sampson* after his awakening, goes out with a renewed strength: As the inward man is renewed day by day, that is, every day; so it is renewed in every worship. Every shower makes the grass and fruit grow in good ground where the root is good, and the weeds where the ground is naught: The more prepared the heart is to obedience in other duties after worship, the more evidence there is that it hath been spiritual in the exercise of it. 'Tis the end of God in every dispensation, as in that of *John Baptist*, To make ready a People prepared for the Lord\*. When the heart is by worship prepared \* Luke 1 17. for fresh acts of obedience, and hath a more exact watchfulness against the incroachments of Sin. As carnal men after worship sprout up in spiritual wickedness; so do spiritual worshippers in spiritual graces: Spiritual fruits, are a sign of a spiritual frame. When men are more prone to sin after duty, 'tis a sign there was but little communion with God in it, and a greater strength of sin, because such an act is



contrary to the end of worship, which is the subduing of Sin. 'Tis a sign the *Physick* hath wrought well, when the stomach hath a better appetite to its appointed food; and worship hath been well performed, when we have a stronger inclination to other acts well pleasing to God, and a more sensible distaste of those temptations we too much relish before. 'Tis a sign of a good Concoction, when there is a greater strength in the vitals of Religion, a more eager desire to know God. When *Moses* had been praying to God, and prevailed with him; he puts up a higher request, to *behold his Glory*\*. When the appetite stands strong to fuller discoveries of God, it is a sign there hath been a spiritual converse with him.

\* Exod. 33. 13, 18.

2. *How is it especially as to humility?* The *Pharisees* worship was without dispute, carnal; and we find them not more humble after all their devotions, but over-grown with more weeds of spiritual pride; they performed them as their righteousness. What men dare plead before God in *his day*, they plead before him in their hearts, in *their day*; but this men will do at the day of Judgement, *we have prophesied in thy Name*, &c. *Mat.* 7. 21. They shew what tincture their services left upon their Spirits: That which excludes them from any acceptation at the last day, excludes them from any estimation of being spiritual in this day. The carnal Worshippers charge God with Injustice in not rewarding them, and claim an acceptation as a compensation due to them, *IJa.* 58. 3. *Wherefore have we afflicted our Souls, and thou takest no knowledge?* A spiritual Worshipper looks upon his duties with shame, as well as he doth upon his sins with confusion, and implores the mercy of God for the one as well as the other. In the 143 *Psal.* v. 2. the Prophet *David* after his supplications, begs of God not to enter into Judgment with him, and acknowledges any answer that God should give him, as a fruit of his faithfulness to his promise, and not the merit of his worship. *In thy Faithfulness answer me*, &c. Whatsoever springs from a gracious Principle, and is the breath of the Spirit, leaves a man more humble; whereas that which proceeds from a stock of nature, hath the true blood of nature running in the veins of it, *viz.* that pride which is naturally derived from *Adam*. The breathing of the Divine Spirit is in every thing to conform us to our Redeemer; that being the main work of his Office, is his work in every particular Christian-act influenced by him. Now Jesus Christ in all his actions was an exact Pattern of Humility. After the institution and celebration of the Supper, a special act of worship in the Church; though he had a sense of all the Authority his Father had given him, yet he humbles himself to wash his Disciples feet\*: And after his sublime Prayer, *John* 17. *He humbles himself to the death, and offers himself to his Murderers*, because of his Fathers pleasure, *John* 18. 1. *When he had spoken those words, he went over the Brook Kedron into the Garden*. What is the end of God in appointing worship, is the end of a spiritual heart in offering it; not his own exaltation but Gods glory: Glorifying the name of God, is the fruit of that Evangelical-worship the Gentiles were in time to give to God, *Psal.* 86. 9. *All Nations which thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee oh Lord, and shall glorify thy Name*. Let us examine then what debasing our selves there is in a sense of our own vileness, and distance from so glorious a Spirit. Self-denial is the heart of all Gospel-grace. Evangelical Spiritual-worship cannot be without the ingredient of the main Evangelical Principle.

\* *Psal.* 143. 2.

\* *John* 13. 2, 3, 4

3. *What delight is there after it?* What pleasure is there, and what is the Object of that pleasure? Is it Communion the we have had with God, or a Fluency in our selves: Is it something which hath touched our hearts, or tickled our fancies? As the strength of sin is known by the delightful thoughts of it after the commission; so is the spirituality of duty, by the object of our delightful remembrance after the performance. It was a sign *David* was spiritual in the worship of God in the Tabernacle, when he enjoyed it, because he longed for the spiritual part of it, when he was exil'd from it: His desires were not only for Liberty to revisit the Tabernacle, but to see the power and glory of God in the Sanctuary, as he had seen it before\*: His desires for it could not have been so ardent, if his reflection upon what had past, had not been delightful; nor could his Soul be poured out in him for the want of such opportunities, if the remembrance of the converse he had had with God, had not been accompanied with a delightful relish\*.

\* *Psal.* 63. 2.

\* *Psal.* 42. 4

Let



Let us examin what delight we find in our spirits after worship.

Use 3. Is of *comfort*. And 'tis very comfortable to consider, that the smallest worship with *the Heart and Spirit*, flowing from a principle of grace, is more acceptable than the most pompous veneration; yea, if the oblation were as precious as the whole Circuit of Heaven and Earth without it. That God that values a Cup of Cold water given to any as his Disciple, will value a sincere service above a costly Sacrifice. God hath his eye upon them that honour his nature; He would not seek such to worship him, if he did not intend to accept such a worship from them: When we therefore invoke him, and praise him, which are the prime parts of Religion; he will receive it as a sweet savour from us, and overlook infirmities mixed with the graces.

The great matter of *discomfort*, and that which makes us question the spirituality of worship, is the *many starts of our Spirits, and roivings to other things*.

For answer to which,

1. 'Tis to be confest, that these starts are natural to us. Who is free from them? We bear in our own bosoms a nest of turbulent thoughts, which like busie Gnatts will be buzzing about us, while we are in our most inward and spiritual converses. Many wild beasts lurk in a mans heart, as in a close and covert wood, and scarce discover themselves, but at our solemn worship.

No duty so holy, No worship so spiritual, that can wholly priviledge us from them: They will jogg us in our most weighty employments, that, as God said to Cain, sin lyes at the door, and enters in, and makes a riot in our Souls. As it is said of wicked men, they cannot sleep for multitude of thoughts\*; so it may be of many a good man; he cannot worship for multitude of thoughts: There will be starts, and more in our Religious, than natural employments; 'tis natural to man: Some therefore think, the Bells tied to Aarons Garments between the Pomegranates, were to warn the People, and recall their fugitive minds to the present service when they heard the sound of them, upon the least motion of the High priest. The Sacrifice of Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, was not exempt from the Fowls pecking at it.\* Zechariah himself was drowsie in the midst of his Visions, which being more amazing, might cause a heavenly intentness\*, Zech. 4. 1. The Angel that talked with me, came again and awaked me, as a man is awaked out of sleep. He had been rouzed up before, but he was ready to drop down again; his heart was gone, till the Angel jogged him. We may complain of such imaginations, as Jerem. doth of the Enemies of the Jews\*. Our Persecutors are swifter than Eagles; they light upon us with as much speed, as Eagles upon a Carcass; they pursue us upon the Mountain of Divine institutions, and they lay wait for us in the Wildernes, in our retired addresses to God.

And this will be so while,

1. There is natural corruption in us. There are in a Godly man two contrary principles, Flesh and Spirit, which endeavour to hinder one anothers acts, and are alway stirring upon the offensive or defensive part\*. There is a body of death continually exhaling its noysom vapours; 'Tis a body of death in our worship, as well as in our natures; it snaps our resolutions asunder\*; it hinders us in the doing good, and contradicts our wills in the stirring up evil: This corruption being seated in all the faculties, and a constant Domestick in them, has the greater opportunity to trouble us, since it is by those faculties that we spiritually transact with God; and it stirs more in the time of religious exercises, though it be in part mortified: As a wounded Beast though tired, will rage and strive to its utmost, when the Enemy is about to fetch a blow at it. All duties of worship, tend to the wounding of corruption; and it is no wonder to feel the striving of sin, to defend it self, and offend us when we have our Arms in our hands to mortifie it, that the blow may be diverted which is directed against it.

The Apostles had aspiring thoughts; and being perswaded of an earthly Kingdom, expected a Grandeur in it: And though we find some appearance of it at other times; as when they were casting out Devils, and gave an account of it to their Master, he gives them a kind of a check\*, intimating that there was some kind of evil in their rejoycing upon that account: Yet this never swelled so high, as to break out into a quarrel who should be greatest, until they had the most solemn

Or:

\* Eccles. 5. 12.

\* Gen. 15. 11.

\* Lam. 4. 19.

\* Gal. 5. 17.

\* Rom. 7. 19.

\* Luke 10. 20

\* Luke 22. 24



Ordinance, the Lords Supper to quell it\*. Our corruption is like Lime, which discovers not its fire by any smoke or heat, till you cast water, the Enemy of fire, upon it : Neither doth our natural corruption rage so much, as when we are using means to quench and destroy it.

\* Job. 1. 6.

2. *While there is a Devil, and we in his Precinct*, As he accuseth us to God, so he disturbs us in our selves : He is a bold Spirit, and loves to intrude himself when we are conversing with God : We read, that when the Angels presented themselves before God, *Satan* comes among them\*. Motions from *Satan* will thrust themselves in with our most raised and Angelical frames ; He loves to take off the edge of our Spirits from God ; He acts but after the old rate ; He from the first envied God an obedience from man, and envied man the felicity of communion with God ; He is unwilling God should have the honour of worship, and that we should have the fruit of it ; He hath himself lost it, and therefore is unwilling we should enjoy it ; and being subtil, he knows how to make impressions upon us suitable to our inbred corruptions, and assault us in the weakest part : He knows all the avenues to get within us, (as he did in the temptation of *Eve*) and being a Spirit, he wants not a power to dart them immediately upon our fancy ; And being a Spirit, and therefore active and nimble, he can shoot those darts faster than our weakness can beat them off : He is diligent also, and watcheth for his Prey, and seeks to devour our services as well as our Souls, and snatch our best morsels from us : We know he mixed himself with our *Saviours* retirements in the Wilderness, and endeavoured to Fly-blow his holy converse with his Father in the preparation to his mediatory work.

*Satan* is Gods Ape, and imitates the Spirit in the Office of a Remembrancer : As the Spirit brings good thoughts and divine promises to mind, to quicken our worship ; so the Devil brings evil things to mind, and endeavours to fasten them in our Souls to disturb us : And though all the foolish starts we have in worship are not purely his issue ; yet being of kin to him, he claps his hands, and sets them on like so many Mastives to tear the service in pieces.

And both those distractions which arise from our own *corruption*, and from *Satan*, are most rife in *worship*, when we are under some pressing affliction. This seems to be *David's* Case, *Psal.* 86. when in *v.* 11. He prays God to unite his heart to fear and worship his Name ; he seems to be under some affliction, or fear of his Enemies ; Oh free me from those distractions of Spirit, and those passions which arise in my Soul, upon considering the designs of my enemies against me, and press upon me in my addresses to thee, and attendances on thee. *Job* also in his affliction complains, *Job.* 17. 11. That his purposes were broken off : He could not make an even thread of thoughts and resolutions ; they were frequently snapt saunder, like rotten Yarn when one is winding it up.

Good Men and spiritual Worshippers have lain under this trouble : Though they are a sign of weakness of grace, or some obstructions in the acting of strong grace ; yet they are not alway evidences of a want of grace : What ariseth from our own *corruption*, is to be matter of humiliation and resistance ; what ariseth from *Satan*, should edge our minds to a noble conquest of them. If the *Apostle* did comfort himself with his disapproving of what rose from the natural spring of sin within him, with his consent to the Law, and dissent from his Lust ; and charges it not upon himself, but upon the sin that dwelt in him, with which he had broken off the former League, and was resolved never to enter into Amity with it : By the same reason we may comfort our selves, if such thoughts are undelighted in, and alienate not our hearts from the worship of God by all their busie intrusions to interrupt us.

2. *These distractions (not allowed) may be occasions by an holy improvement to make our hearts more spiritual after worship, though they disturb us in it* : By answering those ends for which we may suppose God permits them to invade us. And that is,

1. *When they are occasions to humble us.*

(1.) *For our carriage in the particular worship.* There is nothing so dangerous as spiritual pride ; It deprived Devils and Men of the presence of God, and will hinder us of the influence of God. If we had had raised and uninterrupted motions in worship, we should be apt to be lifted up ; and the Devil stands ready to tempt us to self-confidence. You know how it was with *Paul*\* ; His buffetings were occasions to render him more spiritual than his raptures, because more humble. God suffers these

\* 2 Cor. 12.  
from v. 1. to v. 7.



those wandrings, starts and distractions to prevent our spiritual pride, which is as a Worm at the root of spiritual worship, and mind us of the dusty frame of our Spirits, how easily they are blown away: As he sends sickness to put us in mind of the shortness of our breath, and the easiness to lose it. God would make us ashamed of our selves in his presence; that we may own, that what is good in any duty, is meerly from his Grace and Spirit, and not from our selves. That with Paul we may cry out, *by Grace we are what we are*, and by Grace we do what we do: We may be hereby made sensible, that God can alway find something in our exactest worship, as a ground of denying us the successful fruit of it. If we cannot stand upon our duties for Salvation, what can we bottom upon in our selves? If therefore they are occasions to make us out of love with any righteousness of our own, to make us break our hearts for them, because we cannot keep them out; If we mourn for them as our sins, and count them our great afflictions; we have attained that brokenness which is a choice ingredient in a spiritual Sacrifice: Though we have been disturbed by them, yet we are not robbed of the success; we may behold an answer of our worship in our humiliation, in spite of all of them.

(2.) *For the baseness of our Nature.* These unsteady motions help us to discern that heap of vermin that breeds in our nature. Would any man think he had such an averfeness to his Creator and Benefactor; such an unsutableness to him; such an estrangedness from him, were it not for his inspection into his distracted frames? God suffers this to hang over us as a Rod of Correction, to discover and fetch out the folly of our hearts. Could we imagin our natures so highly contrary to that God who is so infinitely amiable, so desirable an Object; or that there should be so much folly and madness in the heart, as to draw back from God in those services, which God hath appointed as pipes through which to communicate his grace, to convey himself, his love and goodness to the Creature? If therefore we have a deep sense of, and strong reflections upon our base nature, and bewail that mass of averfeness which lies there, and that fulness of irreverence towards the God of our mercies, the Object of our worship; 'tis a blessed improvement of our wandrings and diversions. Certainly if any *Israelite* had brought a lame and rotten Lamb to be sacrificed to God, and afterward had bewailed it, and laid open his heart to God in a sensible and humble confession of it; That Repentance had been a better Sacrifice, and more acceptable in the sight of God; than if he had brought a sound and a living Offering.

(2.) *When they are occasions to make us prize duties of worship:* When we argue, as rationally we may, that they are of singular use; since our corrupt hearts and a malicious Devil doth chiefly endeavour to hinder us from them: And that we find we have not those gadding thoughts when we are upon worldly business, or upon any sinful design which may dishonour God and wound our Souls: This is a sign Sin and Satan dislike worship; for he is too subtle a Spirit to oppose that which would further his Kingdom. As it is an argument the Scripture is the Word of God, because the wickedness of the world doth so much oppose it; so it is a ground to believe the profitableness and excellency of worship, because Satan and our own unruly hearts do so much interrupt us in it: If therefore we make this use of our cross steps in worship, to have a greater value for such duties, more affection to them and desires to be frequent in them: Our hearts are growing spiritual, under the weights that would depress them to carnality.

(3.) *When we take a rise from hence, to have heavenly admirations of the graciousness of God.* That he should pity and pardon so many slight addresses to him, and give any gracious returns to us. Though men have foolish rangings every day, and in every duty; yet free grace is so tender as not to punish them, Gen. 8. 21. And the Lord smelt a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not curse the Ground for mans sake, for the imagination of mans heart is evil from his youth. 'Tis observable, that this was just after a Sacrifice which Noah offered to God, v. 20. But probably not without infirmities common to human nature, which may be grounded upon the reason God gives; that though he had destroyed the Earth before, because of the evil of mans imaginations, Gen. 6. 5. He still found evil imaginations; He doth not say in the heart of Cham, or others of Noah's Family; but in mans heart, including Noah also; who had both the Judgments of God upon the former world,  
and



and the mercy of God in his own preservation before his eyes: yet God saw evil imaginations rooted in the nature of Man; and though it were so, yet he would be merciful: If therefore we can, after finding our hearts so vagrant in worship, have real frames of thankfulness that God hath spared us; and be heightened in our admirations at Gods giving us any fruit of such a distracted worship; we take advantage from them, to be raised into an Evangelical frame, which consists in the humble acknowledgments of the grace of God. When *David* takes a review of those tumultuous passions which had ruffled his mind, and possessed him with unbelieving notions of God in the persons of his *Prophets*\*; how high doth his Soul mount in astonishment and thankfulness to God for his *mercy*\*? Notwithstanding his distrust, God did graciously perform his promise, and answer his desire; Then it is *what shall I render to the Lord*? His heart was more affected for it, because it had been so passionate in former distrusts. 'Tis indeed a ground of wondring at the patience of the Spirit of God, that he should guide our hearts when they are so apt to start out; as it is the patience of a Master to guide the hand of his Scholar, while he mixes his writing with many blots. 'Tis not one or two infirmities the Spirit helps us in, and helps over, but *many*\*. 'Tis a sign of a spiritual heart, when he can take a rise to bless God for the renewing and blowing up his affections, in the midst of so many incursions from *Satan* to the contrary, and the readiness of the heart too much to comply with them.

(4.) *When we take occasion from thence to prize the mediation of Christ.* The more distractions jogg us, the more need we should see of going out to a Saviour by Faith. One part of our Saviours Office is to stand between us and the infirmities of our worship: As he is an *Advocate*, he presents our services, and pleads for them and us\*; for the *sins* of our duties, as well as for our other sins. Jesus Christ is an High-priest, appointed by God to take away the *iniquities of our holy things*, which was typified by *Aarons Plate* upon his Mitre\*. Were there no imperfections, were there no creeping up of those *Frogs* into our minds, we should think our worship might merit acceptance with God upon its own account: But if we behold our own weakness, that not a tear, a groan, a sigh is so pure, but must have Christ to make it entertainable; that there is no worship without those blemishes; and upon this, throw all our services into the Arms of Christ for acceptance, and sollicite him to put his merits in the front, to make our ciphers appear valuable; 'tis a spiritual act, the design of God in the Gospel being to advance the honour and mediation of his Son. That is a spiritual and evangelical act, which answers the evangelical design. The design of Satan and our own corruption is defeated, when those interruptions make us run swifter, and take faster hold on the *High-priest* who is to present our worship to God, and our own Souls receive comfort thereby. Christ had temptations offered to him by the Devil in his Wilderness retirement; that from an experimental knowledge, he might be able more *compassionately* to succour us\*; we have such assaults in our retir'd worship especially, that we may be able more highly to value him and his mediation.

3. *Let us not therefore be discouraged by those interruptions and starts of our hearts.*

(1.) *If we find in our selves a strong resistance of them.* The Flesh will be lusting; that cannot be hindered; yet if we do not fulfil the lusts of it, rise up at its command and go about its work, we may be said to walk in the Spirit\*: We walk in the Spirit, if we fulfil not the lusts of the Flesh, though there be a lusting of the Flesh against the Spirit: So we worship in the Spirit, though there be carnal thoughts arising, if we do not fulfil them; though the stirring of them discovers some contrariety in us to God, yet the resistance manifests, that there is a principle of contrariety in us to them; that as there is something of Flesh that lusts against the Spirit, so there is something of Spirit in worship which lusts against the Flesh: We must take heed of omitting worship, because of such in-roads; and lying down in the mire of a total neglect. If our Spirits are made more lively and vigorous against them; If those cold vapours which have risen from our hearts, make us like a Spring in the midst of the cold Earth, more warm: There is in this case more reason for us to bless God, than to be discouraged. God looks upon it as the disease, not the wilfulness of our nature; as the weakness of the Flesh, not the willingness of the Spirit. If we would shut the door upon them, it seems they are unwelcome company:

\* Psal. 116. 11.

\* verse 12.

\* Rom. 8. 26.

\* 1 John. 2. 1.

\* Exod. 28. 35, 38.

\* Heb. 2. 18.

\* Gal. 5. 16, 17.



pany : Men do not use to lock their doors upon those they love : If they break in and disturb us with their impertinencies, we need not be discomfited, unless we give them a share in our affections, and turn our back upon God to entertain them : If their presence makes us sad, their flight would make us joyful.

(2.) *If we find our selves excited to a stricter watch over our hearts against them.* As Travellers will be careful when they come to places where they have been rob'd before, that they be not so easily surprized again. We should not only lament when we have had such foolish imaginations in worship breaking in upon us, but also bless God that we have had no more, since we have hearts so fruitful of weeds. We should give God the glory when we find our hearts preserved from these intruders, and not boast of our selves, but return him our praise for the watch and guard he kept over us to preserve us from such Thieves.

Let us not be discomfited; for as the greatness of our sins, upon our turning to God is no hinderance to our justification, because it doth not depend upon our conversion as the meritorious cause, but upon the infinite value of our Saviours satisfaction, which reaches the greatest sins as well as the least; so the multitude of our bewail'd distractions in worship are not a hinderance to our acceptance, because of the uncontrollable power of Christs intercession.

Use 3. Is for *exhortation*. Since Spiritual worship is due to God, and the Father seeks such to worship him, how much should we endeavour to satisfy the desire and order of God, and act conformable to the Law of our Creation and the love of Redemption? Our end must be the same in worship which was Gods end in Creation and Redemption; to glorify his name, set forth his perfections, and be rendered fit as Creatures and Redeemed ones to partake of that grace which is the fruit of worship. An Evangelical dispensation requires a Spiritual homage; to neglect therefore either the matter or manner of Gospel duties, is to put a slight upon Gospel privileges. The manner of duty is ever of more value than the matter; the *Scarlet dye* is more precious than the cloth tinged with it. God respects more the *disposition of the Sacrificer* than the *multitude of the Sacrifices* \*. The Solemn feasts appointed by God, were but *Dung*, as managed by the Jews, *Mat. 23.* The heart is often welcome without the body, but the body never profitable without the heart; The inward acts of the Spirit require nothing from without to constitute them good in themselves; but the outward acts of devotion require inward acts to render them savory to God. As the goodness of outward acts consists not in the acts themselves, so the acceptableness of them results not from the acts themselves, but from the inward frame animating and quickning those acts, as blood and Spirits running through the veins of a duty to make it a living service in the sight of God. Imperfections in worship hinder not Gods acceptance of it, if the heart Spirited by Grace be there to make it a sweet Savour. The stench of burning flesh and fat in the legal Sacrifices might render them noysome to the outward senses; but God smelt a sweet savour in them, as they respected Christ. When the heart and Spirit are offered up to God, it may be a savory duty, though attended with unsavory imperfections. But a thousand Sacrifices without a stamp of faith, a thousand Spiritual duties with an habitual carnality, are no better than stench with God.

The heart must be purged, as well as the Temple was by our Saviour, of the Thieves that would rob God of his due worship. Antiquity had some Temples, wherein it was a crime to bring any gold; therefore those that came to worship laid their gold aside, before they went into the Temple. We should lay aside our worldly and trading thoughts before we address to worship, *Isa. 26. 9. With my Spirit within me will I seek thee early.* Let not our minds be gadding abroad, and exil'd from God and themselves. It will be thus when the desire of our Soul is to his name and the remembrance of him, ver. 8. When he hath given so great and admirable a gift, as that of his Son, in whom are all things necessary to Salvation, Righteousness, Peace, and pardon of sin, we should manage the remembrance of his name in worship with the closest unitedness of heart, and the most Spiritual affections. The motion of the Spirit is the first act in Religion, to this we are obliged in every act: The Devil requires the Spirit of his votaries; should God have a less dedication than the Devil?



*Motives to back this exhortation.*

\* *Non valet pro-  
cedere contra  
julum* is a rule  
in the civil law.

1. *Not to give God our Spirit is a great sin.* 'Tis a mockery of God, not wor-  
ship; contempt, not adoration, whatever our outward fervency or protestations  
may be\*. Every alienation of our hearts from him is a real scorn put upon him:  
The acts of the Soul are real, and more the acts of the man than the acts of the bo-  
dy; because they are the acts of the choicest part of man, and of that which is the first  
spring of all bodily motions; 'tis the *aby* & *in* the Inrenal speech whereby we  
must speak with God: To give him therefore, only an external form of worship with-  
out the life of it, is a taking his name in vain: We mock him, when we mind not what  
we are speaking to him, or what he is speaking to us; when the motions of our hearts  
are contrary to the motions of our tongues; when we do any thing before him slo-  
venly, impudently or rashly. As in a *Liturgi*, it is absurd to sing one Tune and play  
another; so it is a foul thing, to tell God one thing with our lips, and think ano-  
ther thing with our hearts; 'tis a sin like that the *Apostle* chargeth the Heathens with,  
*Rom. 1. 20. they like not to retain God in their knowledge*; their stomachs are sick  
while they are upon any duty, and never leave working, till they have thrown up  
all the spiritual part of Worship, and rid themselves of the thoughts of God, which  
are as unwelcome and troublesome Guests to them: When men behave themselves  
in the sight of God, as if God were not God; they do not only defame him, but  
deny him, and violate the unchangeable perfections of the Divine Nature.

\* *Ecclef. 5. 1.*

(1.) *'Tis against the Majesty of God.* When we have not awful thoughts of  
that great Majesty to whom we address; when our Souls cleave not to him, when  
we petition him in Prayer, or when he gives out his Orders to us in his Word. 'Tis  
a contempt of the Majesty of a Prince, if whiles he is speaking to us, we listen not to  
him with reverence and attention, but turn our backs on him, to play with one of  
his Hounds, or talk with a Begger; or while we speak to him, to rake in a Dung-  
hill. *Solomon* adviseth us to *keep our foot when we go to the House of God*\*. Our af-  
fections should be steady, and not slip away again; why? *v. 2. because God is in  
Heaven, &c.* He is a God of Majesty; earthly dirty frames are unsuitable to the  
God of Heaven; low Spirits are unsuitable to the most High. We would not bring our  
mean Servants, or dirty Dogs into a Princes Presence Chamber; yet we bring not  
only our worldly, but our prophane affections into Gods presence: We give in this  
case, those *services* to God, which our *Governour* would think unworthy of him\*. The  
more excellent and glorious God is, the greater contempt of him it is to suffer such  
foolish affections to be Competitors with him for our hearts: 'Tis a scorn put upon  
him to converse with a Creature while we are dealing with him; but a greater to  
converse in our thoughts and fancies with some sordid lust, which is most hateful to  
him: And the more aggravation it attracts, in that we are to apprehend him the  
most glorious Object sitting upon his Throne in time of worship, and our selves  
standing as vile Creatures before him, supplicating for our lives, and the conveyances  
of grace and mercy to our Souls: As if a grand Mutineer, instead of humbly beg-  
ging the pardon of his offended Prince, should present his Petition not only scrib-  
led and blotted, but besmeared with some loathsome excrement. 'Tis unbecoming  
the Majesty both of God, and the worship it self, to present him with a Picture in-  
stead of Substance, and bring a world of nasty affections in our hearts, and ridicu-  
lous toys in our heads before him, and worship with indisposed and heedless  
Souls.

\* *Mal. 1. 8.*

*Malac. 1. 14.* He is a great King, therefore address to him with fear and  
reverence.

(2.) *'Tis against the Life of God.* Is a dead worship proportioned to a living  
God? The separation of heavenly affections from our Souls before God, makes  
them as much a Carcass in his sight, as the divorce of the Soul makes the Body a  
Carcass; When the affections are separated, worship is no longer worship, but a  
dead offering, a lifeless bulk; for the essence and spirit of worship is departed:  
Though the Soul be present with the Body in a way of information, yet it is not pre-  
sent in a way of affection, and this is the worst; for it is not the separation of the Soul  
from informing, that doth separate a man from God, but the removal of our affec-  
tions from him. If a man pretend an application to God, and sleep and snore all the  
time; without question such a one did not worship: In a careless worship, the heart  
is



is morally dead while the eyes are open : *The heart of the Spouse\* waked* whiles her eyes slept, and our hearts on the contrary sleep while our eyes wake.

\* Cant. 5. 2.

Our blessed Saviour hath died to *purge our Consciences from dead works* and frames, that we may serve the *living God\**; to serve God as a God of Life *Dauids Soul* cried and *fainted* for God under this consideration\* : but to present our bodies without our Spirits, is such a usage of God, that implies he is a dead Image, not worthy of any but a dead and heartless service : Like one of those *Idols* the *Psalmist* speaks of\*, that have *eyes and see not, ears and hear not*, no life in it : Though it be not an objective Idolatry, because the worship is directed to the true God ; yet I may call it a subjective Idolatry, in regard of the frame, fit only to be presented to some senseless stock. We intimate God to be no better than an Idol, and to have no more knowledge of us and insight into us, than an Idol can have : If we did believe him to be the living God, we durst not come before him with services so unsuitable to him, and reproaches of him.

\* Heb. 9. 14.

\* Psal. 42. 2.

\* Psal. 115. 5.

( 3. ) *'Tis against the infiniteness of God.* We should worship God with those boundless affections which bear upon them a Shadow or Image of his Infiniteness ; such are the desires of the Soul which know no limits, but start out beyond whatsoever enjoyment the heart of man possesses. No creeping Creature was to be offered to God in Sacrifice ; but such as had legs to run, or wings to fly : For us to come before God with a light creeping frame, is to worship him with the lowest finite affections ; as though any thing though never so mean or torn, might satisfy an infinite Being ; as though a poor shallow Creature could give enough to God without giving him the heart, when indeed we cannot give him a worship proportionable to his infiniteness, did our hearts swell as large as Heaven in our desires for him in every act of our duties.

( 4. ) *'Tis against the spirituality of God.* God being a Spirit, calls for a worship in Spirit ; to withhold this from him, implies him to be some gross corporeal matter : As a *Spirit, he looks for the heart* ; a wrestling heart in Prayer ; a trembling heart in the Word\* : To bring nothing but the Body when we come to a spiritual God to beg spiritual benefits, to wait for spiritual communications, which can only be dispensed to us in a spiritual manner, is unsuitable to the spiritual nature of God : A meer carnal service implicitly denies his spirituality, which requires of us higher engagements than meer corporeal ones.

\* Isa. 66. 2.

*Worship* should be rational, not an imaginative service, wherein is required the activity of our noblest faculties ; and our fancy ought to have no share in it, but in subserviency to the more spiritual part of our Soul.

( 5. ) *'Tis against the supremacy of God.* As God is *one*, and the only Sovereign ; so our hearts should be one, cleaving wholly to him, and undivided from him : In pretending to deal with him, we acknowledge his Deity and Sovereignty ; but in withholding our choicest faculties and affections from him, and the starting of our minds to vain Objects, we intimate their equality with God, and their right as well as his to our hearts and affections : 'Tis as if a Princess should commit Adultery with some base Scullion, while she is before her Husband ; which would be a plain denial of his sole right to her. It intimates that other things are superior to God ; they are true Sovereigns that ingross our hearts. If a man were addressing himself to a Prince, and should in an instant turn his back upon him, upon a beck or nod from some inconsiderable person ; is it not an evidence, that that person that invited him away, hath a greater sovereignty over him, than that Prince to whom he was applying himself ? And do we not discard Gods absolute dominion over us, when at the least beck of a corrupt inclination, we can dispose of our hearts to it, and alienate them from God ? As they in *Ezek. 33. 32.* left the service of God for the service of their *covetousness* ; which evidenced that they owned the authority of sin more than the authority of God : This is not to serve God as our Lord and absolute Master, but to make God serve our turn, and submit his Sovereignty to the Supremacy of some unworthy affection. The Creature is preferred before the Creator, when the heart runs most upon it in time of religious worship, and our own carnal interest swallows up the affections that are due to God : 'Tis an *idol set up in the heart\** in his solemn presence, and attracts that devotion to it self, which we only owe to our Sovereign Lord ; and the more base and contemptible that is to which the Spirit is

\* Ezek. 14. 4.



devoted, the more contempt there is of Gods dominion. *Judas* his kiss with a *hail Mistr*, was no act of worship, or an owning his Masters authority; but a designing the satisfaction of his Covetousness in the betraying of him.

(6.) *'Tis against the Wisdom of God.* God as a God of order, has put earthly things in subordination to heavenly; and we by this unworthy carriage invert this order, and put heavenly things in subordination to earthly; in placing mean and low things in our hearts, and bringing them so placed into Gods presence, which his Wisdom at the Creation put under our feet. A service without spiritual affections, is a *sacrifice of Fools*, *Eccles. 5. 1.* which have lost their Brains and Understandings: A foolish Spirit is very unsuitable to an infinitely wise God: Well may God say of such a one, as *Achish* of *David* who seemed mad; *Why have you brought this Fellow to play the Mad-man in my presence? Shall this Fellow come into my House?* *1 Sam. 21. 15.*

(7.) *'Tis against the Omniscience of God.* To carry it fair without and impertinently within, is as though God had not an all-seeing eye that could pierce into the heart, and understand every motion of the inward faculties; As though God were easily cheated with an outward fawning service, like an Apothecaries box with a gilded title, that may be full of Cobwebs within: What is such a carriage, but a design to deceive God; when with *Herod* we pretend to worship Christ, and intend to murder all the motions of Christ in our Souls? A heedless Spirit, an estrangement of our Souls, a giving the Reins to them to run out from the presence of God to see every Reed shaken with the Wind, is to deny him to be the Searcher of hearts, and the Discerner of secret thoughts; as though he could not look through us to the darkness and remoteness of our minds, but were an ignorant God, who might be put off with the worst as well as the best in our Flock. If we did really believe there were a God of infinite Knowledge, who saw our frames, and whether we came drest with *Wedding-garments* suitable to the duties we are about to perform; should we be so garrish, and put him off with such trivial stuff, without any reverence of his Majesty?

(8.) *'Tis against the Holiness of God.* To alienate our Spirits, is to offend him while we pretend to worship him; Though we may be mighty officious in the external part, yet our base and carnal affections make all our worship but as a heap of Dung; and who would not look upon it as an affront, to lay Dung before a Prince's Throne? *Pro. 21. 27. The Sacrifice of the Wicked, is an abomination: How much more when he brings it with a wicked mind?* A putrified Carcass under the Law, had not been so great an affront to the Holiness of God, as a frothy unmelted heart, and a wanton fancy in a time of worship. God is so holy, that if we could offer the worship of Angels, and the quintessence of our Souls in his service, it would be beneath his infinite purity: How unworthy then are they of him, when they are presented not only without the sense of our uncleanness, but sullied with the fumes and exhalations of our corrupt affections, which are as so many Plague spots upon our duties, contrary to the unspotted purity of the Divine Nature? Is not this an unworthy conceit of God, and injurious to his infinite Holiness?

(9.) *'Tis against the Love and Kindness of God.* 'Tis a condescension in God to admit a piece of Earth to offer up a duty to him, when he hath *myriads of Angels* to attend him in his Court and celebrate his Praise: To admit Man to be an Attendant on him and a Partner with Angels, is a high favour. 'Tis not a single mercy, but a heap of mercies to be admitted into the presence of God, *Psal. 5. 7. I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercies.* When the blessed God is so kind as to give us access to his Majesty, do we not undervalue his kindness when we deal uncivilly with him, and deny him the choicest part of our selves? 'Tis a contempt of his Sovereignty, as our Spirits are due to him by nature; a contempt of his Goodness, as our Spirits are due to him by gratitude: How abusive a carriage is it to make use of his mercy to encourage our impudence, that should excite our fear and reverence? How unworthy would it be for an indigent Debtor to bring to his indulgent Creditor, an empty Purse instead of Payment? When God holds out his Golden Scepter to encourage our approaches to him; stands ready to give us the pardon of sin and full felicity, the best things he hath; Is it a fit requital of his kind-



kindness, to give him a formal outside only, a shadow of Religion; to have the heart overswayed with other thoughts and affections; as if all his proffers were so contemptible, as to deserve only a slight at our hands? 'Tis a contempt of the love and kindness of God.

(10.) 'Tis *against the Sufficiency and Fullness of God*. When we give God our Bodies and the Creature our Spirits, it intimates a conceit, that there is more content to be had in the Creature than in God blessed for ever; that the waters in the *Cistern* are sweeter than those in the *Fountain*: Is not this a practical giving God the Lye, and denying those promises wherein he hath declared the satisfaction he can give to the Spirit, as he is the God of the Spirits of all Flesh?

If we did imagin the excellency and loveliness of God were worthy to be the ultimate Object of our affections, the heart would attend more closely upon him, and be terminated in him; did we believe God to be allsufficient, full of grace and goodness, a tender Father, not willing to forsake his own; willing, as well as able to supply their wants; the heart would not so lamely attend upon him, and would not upon every impertinency be diverted from him. There is much of a wrong notion of God, and a predominancy of the world above him in the heart, when we can more favourably relish the thoughts of low inferior things than heavenly, and let our Spirits upon every trifling occasion be fugitives from him: 'Tis a testimony that we make not God our chiefest good. If apprehensions of his excellency did possess our Souls, they would be fastned on him, glued to him; we should not listen to that rabble of foolish thoughts that steal our hearts so often from him. Were our breathings after God as strong as the pantings of the Hart after the water Brooks, we should be like that Creature; not diverted in our Course by every Puddle. Were God the predominant satisfactory Object in our eye, he would carry our whole Soul along with him.

When our Spirits readily retreat from God in worship upon every giddy motion, 'tis a kind of repentance that ever we did come near him, and implies, that there is a fuller satisfaction, and more attractive excellency in that which doth so easily divert us, than in that God to whose worship we did pretend to address our selves: 'Tis as if, when we were petitioning a Prince, we should immediately turn about, and make request to one of his Guard; as though so mean a person were more able to give us the boon we want, than the Sovereign is.

2. Consideration by way of *motive*. To have our Spirits off from God in worship, is a bad sign. It was not so in Innocence. The heart of *Adam* could cleave to God; the Law of God was engraven upon him; he could apply himself to the fulfilling of it without any twinkling; there was no folly and vanity in his mind, no independency in his thoughts, no duty was his burden; for there was in him a proneness to, and delight in all the duties of worship: 'Tis the Fall hath distempered us; and the more unwieldiness there is in our Spirits, the more carnal our affections are in worship, the more evidence there is of the strength of that revolted state.

(1.) It argues much corruption in the heart. As by the eruptions of the Stomach, we may judge of the windiness and foulness of it; so by the inordinate motions of our minds and hearts, we may judge of the weakness of its complexion. A strength of sin is evidenced by the eruptions and ebullitions of it in worship, when they are more sudden, numerous, and vigorous than the motions of grace. When the heart is apt like tinder to catch fire from *Satan*, 'tis a sign of much combustible matter suitable to his temptation. Were not corruption strong, the Soul could not turn so easily from God when it is in his presence, and hath an advantageous opportunity to create a fear and awe of God in it: Such base fruit could not sprout up so suddenly, were there not much sap and juice in the root of sin.

What communion with a living root can be evidenced without exercises of an inward life? That Spirit which is a Well of living waters in a gracious heart, will be especially springing up when it is before God.

(2.) It shews much affection to earthly things, and little to heavenly. There must needs be an inordinate affection to earthly things, when upon every slight solicitation we can part with God, and turn the back upon a service glorious for him, and advantageous for our selves, to wedd our hearts to some idle fancy that signifies nothing. How can we be said to entertain God in our affections, when we give him

not



not the precedency in our understandings, but let every trifle juggle the sense of God out of our minds? Were our hearts fully determined to spiritual things, such vanities could not seat themselves in our understandings, and divide our Spirits from God. Were our hearts ballanced with a love to God, the world could never steal our hearts so much from his worship, but his worship would draw our hearts to it.

It shews a base neutrality in the greatest concerns; a *balting between God and Baal*; a contrariety between Affection and Conscience, when natural Conscience presses a man to duties of worship, and his other affections pull him back, draw him to carnal objects, and make him slight that whereby he may honour God. God argues the prophaneſs of the *Jews* hearts from the wickedness they brought into his house, and acted there, *Jer. 23. 11. Yea, in my house, that is, my worship, I found their wickedness, saith the Lord.* Carnality in worship is a kind of an Idolatrous frame; when the heart is renewed, *Idols* are cast to the *Moles* and the *Batts* *Ila. 2. 20.*

(3.) It shews *much hypocrisie to have our Spirits off from God.* The mouth speaks, and the carriage pretends what the heart doth not think; there is a dissent of the heart from the pretence of the body.

\* *Psal. 1. 4.*

Instability is a sure sign of Hypocrisie. *Double thoughts* argue a *double heart.* The Wicked are compared to *Chaff*\*, for the uncertain and various motions of their minds, by the least wind of fancy. The least motion of a carnal Object diverts the Spirit from God, as the scent of Carrion doth the Raven from the flight it was set upon.

The People of God are called Gods Spouse, and God calls himself their Husband; whereby is noted, the most intimate union of the Soul with God, and that there ought to be the highest love and affection to him, and faithfulness in his worship; but when the heart doth start from him in worship, it is a sign of the unsteadfastness of it with God, and a disrelish of any communion with him; It is as God complains of the *Israelites*, a going a whoring after our own imaginations.

As grace respects God as the object of worship, so it looks most upon God in approaching to him. Where there is a likeness and love, there is a desire of converse and intimacy; if there be no spiritual entwining about God in our worship, it is a sign there is no likeness to him, no true sense of him, no renewed image of God in us: Every living Image will move strongly to joyn it self with its original Copy, and be glad with *Jacob*, to sit steadily in those Chariots that shall convey him to his beloved *Jeseeph.*

Motion 3. Consider the danger of a carnal worship

(1.) *We lose the comfort of worship.* The Soul is a great Gainer when it offers a spiritual worship, and as great a loser when it is unfaithful with God. Treachery and perfidiouſness hinder commerce among men; so doth Hypocrisie in its own nature, communion with God. God never promised any thing to the Carcass but to the Spirit of worship. God hath no obligation upon him by any word of his, to reward us with himself, when we perform it not to himself: When we give an outside worship, we have only the outside of an ordinance: We can expect no kernel, when we give God only the shell: He that only licks the outside of the Glass, can never be refreshed with the rich Cordial enclosed within. A cold and lazy formality, will make God to withdraw the light of his countenance, and not shine with any delightful communications upon our Souls; but if we come before him with a liveness of affections, and steadiness of heart; he will draw the vail, and cause his glory to display it self before us. An humble praying Christian, and a warm affectionate Christian in worship, will soon find a God who is delighted with such frames, and cannot long withhold himself from the Soul: When our hearts are enflamed with love to him in worship, 'tis a preparation to some act of love on his part whereby he intends further to gratifie us. When *John* was in the Spirit on the Lords day, that is in spiritual employment, and meditation and other duties, he had that great Revelation of what should happen to the Church in all ages\*; His being in the Spirit, intimates his ordinary course on that day, and not any extraordinary act in him, though it was followed with an extraordinary discovery of God to him; When he was thus engaged, *he heard a voice behind him.*

\* *Rev. 1. 10.*

God



God doth not require of us spirituality in worship to advantage himself, but that we might be prepared to be advantaged by him. If we have a clear and well disposed eye, 'tis not a benefit to the Sun, but fits us to receive benefits from his Beams. Worship is an act that perfects our own Souls; they are then most widened by spiritual frames, to receive the influence of divine blessings, as an eye most opened receives the fruit of the Sun's light, better than the eye that is shut. The communications of God are more or less, according as our spiritual frames are more or less in our worship: God will not give his blessings to unsuitable hearts. What a nasty Vessel is a carnal heart for a spiritual communication? The chief end of every duty enjoined by God, is to have communion with him; and therefore it is called, a drawing near to God: 'Tis impossible therefore, that the outward part of any duty can answer the end of God in his institution. 'Tis not a bodily appearance or gesture whereby men can have communion with God, but by the impressions of the heart, and reflections of the heart upon God: Without this, all the rich streams of grace will run besides us, and the growth of the Soul be hindered and impaired. A diligent hand makes rich, saith the wise man; a diligent heart in spiritual worship, brings in rich incomes to the humble and spiritual Soul.

(2.) *It renders the worship not only unacceptable, but abominable to God.* It makes our Gold to become Dross; it soyls our duties, and bespots our Souls. A carnal and unsteady frame shews an indifferency of Spirit at best; and *lukewarmness* is as ungrateful to God, as heavy and nauseous meat is to the stomach, he *spues them out of his mouth*\*. As our gracious God doth overlook infirmities where intentions are good, and endeavours serious and strong; so he loaths the services where the frames are stark naught, *Psal. 66. 118. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my Prayer.* Luke warm and indifferent services stink in the Nostrils of God. The heart seems to loath God when it starts from him upon every occasion, when it is unwilling to employ itself about, and stick close to him: And can God be pleased with such a frame? The more of the Heart and Spirit is in any service, the more real goodness there is in it, and the more savoury it is to God; the less of the Heart and Spirit, the less of goodness, and the more nauseous to God, who loves Righteousness and *Truth in the inward parts*\*. And therefore infinite Goodness and Holiness cannot but hate worship presented to him with deceitful, carnal and flitting affections: They must be more nauseous to God, than a putrified Carcass can be to Man: They are the prophanings of that which should be the habitation of the Spirit: They make the Spirit, the seat of duty, a filthy dung-hill; and are as loathsome to God, as Money-changers in the Temple were to our Saviour.

\* Rev. 3. 16.

\* *Psal. 51. 9.*

We see the evil of carnal frames, and the necessity and benefit of spiritual frames: For further help in this last, let us practise the following *directions*.

*Direction 1. Keep up spiritual frames out of worship.* To avoid low affections, we must keep our hearts as much as we can in a settled elevation. If we admit unworthy dispositions at one time, we shall not easily be rid of them at another\*: As he that would not be bitten with Gnats in the Night, must keep his windows shut in the Day; when they are once entred 'tis not easie to expel them: In which respect, one adviseth, to be such out of worship as we would be in worship. If we mix spiritual affections with our worldly employments, worldly affections will not mingle themselves so easily with our heavenly engagements. If our hearts be spiritual in our outward calling, they will scarce be carnal in our religious service. If we *walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the Flesh*\*. A spiritual walk in the day, will hinder carnal lustings in worship. The Fire was to be kept alive upon the Altar when Sacrifices were not offered, from morning till night, from night till morning, as well as in the very time of Sacrifice. A spiritual life and vigour out of worship, would render it at its season sweet and easie, and preserve a spontaneity and preparedness to it, and make it both natural and pleasant to us.

\* *Fitzherbert Pol. in relig. parts. 2. cap. 19. § 12.*

\* Gal. 5. 16.

Any thing that doth unhinge and discompose our Spirits, is inconsistent with religious services, which are to be performed with the greatest sedateness and gravity. All irregular passions disturb the serenity of the Spirit, and open the door for Satan\*. Saith the Apostle, *Let not the Sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the Devil.*

\* Eph 4. 26. 27.



*Devil.* Where wrath breaks the Lock, the Devil will quickly be over the Threshold; and though they be allayed, yet they leave the heart sometime after, like the Sea rowling and swelling after the Storm is ceased.

Mixture with ill company leaves a tincture upon us in worship. *Ephraim* allying himself with the *Gentiles*, bred an indifferency in Religion. *Hos. 7. 8. Ephraim hath mixed himself with the People. Ephraim is a Cake not turn'd:* It will make our hearts, and consequently our services half Dough, as well as half bak'd: These and the like make the holy Spirit withdraw himself, and then the Soul lies like a wind-bound Vessel and can make no way. When the Sun departs from us, it carries its Beams away with it; then doth *Darkness spread it self over the Earth, and the Beasts of the Forests creep out*\*. When the Spirit withdraws a while from a good man, it carries away, (though not habitual, yet) much of the exciting and assisting grace; and then carnal dispositions perk up themselves from the bosome of natural corruption. To be spiritual in worship, we must bar the door at other times against that which is contrary to it: As he that would not be infected with a contagious disease, carries some Preservative about with him, and inures himself to good scents.

To this end, be much in secret ejaculations to God; these are the purest flights of the Soul, that have more of fervor and less of carnality; they preserve a liveliness in the Spirit, and make it more fit to perform solemn stated worship with greater freedom and activity: A constant use of this would make our whole lives, lives of worship. As frequent sinful acts strengthen habits of sin; so frequent religious acts strengthen habits of grace.

Direction 2. *Excite and exercise particularly a love to God, and dependence on him.*

Love is a commanding affection, a uniting grace; it draws all the faculties of the Soul to one Center. The Soul that loves God, when it hath to do with him, is bound to the beloved Object; It can mind nothing else during such impressions. When the affection is set to the worship of God, every thing the Soul hath will be bestowed upon it: As *David's* disposition was to the Temple, 1 Chron. 29. 3. Carnal frames like the Fowls, will be lighting upon the Sacrifice; but not when it is enflam'd: Though the scent of the flesh invite them, yet the heat of the fire drives them to their distance. A flaming love will singe the Flies that endeavour to interrupt and disturb us. The happiness of Heaven consists in a full attraction of the Soul to God, by his glorious influence upon it; There will be such a diffusion of his goodness throughout the Souls of the Blessed, as will unite the affections perfectly to him: These affections which are scattered here, will be there gathered into one flame, moving to him and centring in him: Therefore the more of a heavenly frame possesses our affections here, the more settled and uniform will our hearts be in all their motions to God, and operations about him.

Excite a dependence on him, *Pro. 16. 3. Commit thy works to the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.* Let us go out in God's strength and not in our own; vain is the help of man in any thing, and vain is the help of the heart: 'Tis through God only we can do valiantly in spiritual concerns as well as temporal; the want of this makes but slight impressions upon the Spirit.

Direction 3. *Nurish bright conceptions of the Majesty of God in your minds.* Let us consider, that we are drawing to God; the most amiable Object, the best of Beings, worthy of infinite honour, and highly meriting the highest affections we can give; a God that made the world by a word; that upholds the great frame of Heaven and Earth; a Majesty above the conceptions of Angels; who uses not his power to strike us to our deserved punishment, but his love and bounty to allure us; a God that gave all the Creatures to serve us, and can in a trice make them as much our Enemies as he hath now made them our Servants. Let us view him in his greatness, and in his goodness, that our hearts may have a true value of the worship of so great a Majesty, and count it the most worthy employment with all diligence to attend upon him. When we have a fear of God, it will make our worship serious; when we have a joy in God, it will make our worship durable. Our affections will be raised, when we represent God in the most reverential, endearing and obliging circumstances. We honour the Majesty of God, when we consider him with due reverence according to the greatness and perfection of his works; and in this reverence of his Majesty doth worship chiefly consist. Low thoughts of God will make



make low frames in us before him : If we thought God an infinite glorious Spirit, how would our hearts be lower than our knees in his presence ? How humbly, how believingly pleading is the *Psalmist*, when he considers God to be without comparison in the Heavens ; *to whom none of the Sons of the Mighty can be likened* ; when there was none like to him in strength or faithfulness round about\* ? We should have also deep impressions of the Omniscience of God ; and remember we have to deal with a God that searcheth the heart and tryeth the reins ; to whom the most secret temper is as visible, as the loudest words are Audible ; that though man judges by outward expressions, God judges by inward affections. As the Law of God regulates the inward frames of the heart ; so the eye of God pitches upon the inward intentions of the Soul. If God were visibly present with us, should we not approach to him with strong affections ; summon our Spirits to attend upon him ; behave our selves modestly before him ? Let us consider, he is as really present with us, as if he were visible to us ; let us therefore preserve a strong sense of the presence of God. No man but one out of his wits, when he were in the presence of a Prince, and making a Speech to him ; would break off at every Period, and run after the catching of Butter-flies. Remember in all worship you are before the Lord, to whom all things are open and naked.

\* *Psalm* 89. 6, 7, 8.

Direction 4. *Let us take heed of inordinate desires after the world.* As the world steals away a mans heart from the Word, so it doth from all other worship ; *It chokes the Word*\* ; it stifles all the spiritual breathings after God in every duty : The edge of the Soul is blunted by it, and made too dull for such sublime exercises. The *Apostles* rule in Prayer, when he joyns *sobriety with watching unto Prayer*, is of concern in all worship, sobriety in the pursuit and use of all wordly things. A man drunk with worldly fumes cannot watch, cannot be heavenly, affectionate, spiritual in service. There is a magnetick force in the Earth, to hinder our flights to Heaven : Birds, when they take their first flights from the Earth, have more flutterings of their wings, than when they are mounted further in the Air, and got more without the Sphear of the Earths attractiveness ; the motion of their wings is more steady, that you can scarce perceive them stir ; they move like a Ship with a full Gale. The world is a clog upon the Soul, and a bar to spiritual frames : 'Tis as hard to elevate the heart to God in the midst of a hurry of worldly affairs, as it is difficult to meditate when we are near a great noise of waters falling from a Precipice, or in the midst of a Volly of Muskets. Thick clay affections bemire the heart, and make it unfit for such high flights it is to take in worship : Therefore get your hearts clear from worldly thoughts and desires, if you would be more spiritual in worship.

\* *Mat.* 13. 27.

1 *Pet.* 4. 7.

5. *Let us be deeply sensible of our present wants, and the supplies we may meet with in worship.* Cold affections to the things we would have, will grow cooler : Weakness of desire for the communications in worship, will freeze our hearts at the time of worship, and make way for vain and foolish diversions. A Begger that is ready to perish, and knows he is next door to ruin, will not slightly and dully beg an Alms ; and will not be diverted from his importunity by every slight call, or the moving of an Atom in the Air. Is it Pardon we would have ? Let us apprehend the blackness of sin with the aggravations of it as it respects God ; Let us be deeply sensible of the want of pardon and worth of mercy, and get our affections into such a frame, as a condemned man would do : Let us consider, that as we are now at the Throne of Gods grace, we shall shortly be at the Bar of Gods Justice ; and if the Soul should be forlorn there, how fixedly and earnestly would it plead for mercy ? Let us endeavour to stir up the same affections now, which we have seen some dying men have, and which we suppose despairing Souls would have done at Gods Tribunal.

\* We must be sensible that the life or death of our Souls depends upon worship. Would we not be ashamed to be ridiculous in our carriage while we are eating ; and shall we not be ashamed to be cold or garish before God, when the Salvation of our Souls as well as the Honour of God is concerned ? If we did see the heaps of sins, the eternity of punishment due to them ; If we did see an angry and offended Judge ; If we did see the riches of mercy, the glorious outgoings of God in the Sanctuary, the blessed Doles he gives out to men when they spiritually attend upon him ; both the one and the other would make us perform our duties humbly, sincerely, earnestly, and affectionately, and wait upon him with our whole Souls, to

\* *Guliel. Paris. Rhetor. Divin. cap. 26. p. 350. Col. 1.*



have misery averted and mercy bestowed. Let our sense of this be encouraged by the consideration of our Saviour presenting his merits: With what affection doth he present his merits, his blood shed upon the Cross now in Heaven? And shall our hearts be cold and frozen, flitting and unsteady, when his affections are so much concerned? Christ doth not present any Mans case and duties without a sense of his wants, and shall we have none of our own?

Let me add this; let us affect our hearts with a sense of what supplies we have met with in former worship: The delightful remembrance of what converse we have had with God in former worship, would spiritualize our hearts for the present worship. Had Peter had a view of Christs glory in the Mount, fresh in his thoughts, he would not so easily have turned his back upon his Master: Nor would the *Pharisees* have been at leisure for their Idolatry, had they preserved the sense of the Majesty of God discovered in his late Thunders from Mount Sinai.

6. *If any thing intrudes that may choke the Worship, cast it speedily out.* We cannot hinder Satan and our own Corruption from presenting Coolers to us, but we may hinder the success of them: We cannot hinder the Gnats from buzzing about us when we are in our business, but we may prevent them from settling upon us. A man that is running on a considerable Errand, will shun all unnecessary discourse that may make him forget or loyter in his business. What though there may be something offered that is good in it self; yet if it hath a tendency to despoil God of his honour, and our selves of the spiritual intentness in worship, send it away. Those that weed a Field of Corn, examin not the nature and particular virtues of the Weeds; but consider only how they choke the Corn, to which the native juice of the Soil is design'd. Consider what you are about; and if any thing interpose that may divert you, or cool your affections in your present worship, cast it out.

7. *As to private worship, let us lay hold of the most melting opportunities and frames.*

When we find our hearts in a more than ordinary spiritual frame, let us look upon it as a Call from God to attend him: Such impressions and motions are Gods Voice, inviting us into communion with him in some particular act of worship, and promising us some success in it. When the *Psalmist* had a secret motion to *seek Gods face*, and complied with it\*, the issue is the encouragement of his heart, which breaks out into an exhortation to others to be of good courage, and wait on the Lord, v. 13, 14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and he shall strengthen thy heart, wait I say on the Lord.*

\* *Psalm 27. 8.*

\* *Reynolds*

\*One blow will do more on the Iron when it is hot, than a hundred when it is cold: Melted Metals may be stamp't with any impression; but once hardned, will with difficulty be brought into the figure we intend.

8. *Let us examin our selves at the end of every act of worship, and chide our selves for any carnality we perceive in them.* Let us take a review of them, and examin the reason; why art thou so low and carnal oh my Soul? As *David* did of his disquietedness, *Psalm 42. 5. Why art thou cast down oh my Soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?* If any unworthy frames have surprized us in worship, let us seek them out after worship; call them to the bar; make an exact scrutiny into the causes of them, that we may prevent their incursions another time; let our pulses beat quick, by way of anger and indignation against them: This would be a repairing what hath been amiss; otherwise they may grow, and clogg an after worship more than they did a former. Dayly examination is an Antidote against the temptations of the following day, and constant examination of our selves after duty, is a Preservative against vain encroachments in following duties; and upon the finding them out, let us apply the blood of Christ by Faith for our Cure, and draw strength from the death of Christ for the conquest of them, and let us also be humbled for them. God lifts up the humble: When we are humbled for our carnal frames in one duty, we shall find our selves by the Grace of God more elevated in the next.



A  
DISCOURSE  
UPON THE  
ETERNITY  
OF  
G O D.

Psalm 90. 2.

*Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth and the World; even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*

**T**HE Title of this Psalm is a Prayer; The Author Moses. Some think not only this, but the Ten following Psalms were composed by him. The Title wherewith he is dignified, is *The Man of God*, as also in *Dent. 33.*  
1. One inspir'd by him, to be his Interpreter, and deliver his Oracles; One particularly directed by him: \*One who as a Servant, did diligently employ himself in his Masters business, and acted for the Glory of God; \*He was the Minister of the Old Testament, and the Prophet of the New.

\*Coccei in Loc.

\*Austin in Loc.

There are two parts of this Psalm.

\*Pareus in loc.

1. A complaint of the frailty of Mans Life in general, verse 3, 4, 5, 6. And then a particular complaint of the condition of the Church, v. 8, 9, 10.

2. A Prayer, v. 12.

But before he speaks of the shortness of humane life, he fortifies them by the consideration of the refuge they had, and should find in God, v. 1. *Lord thou hast been our dwelling place in all Generations.*

We have had no settled abode in the Earth, since the time of *Abraham's* being called out from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*: We have had *Canaan* in a promise, we have it not yet in possession; We have been exposed to the Cruelties of an oppressing Enemy, and the incommodities of a desert Wilderness; we have wanted the fruits of the Earth, but not the dews of Heaven. *Thou hast been our dwelling place in all Generations.* *Abraham* was under thy Conduct; *Isaac* and *Jacob* under thy Care: Their Posterity were multiplied by thee, and that under their oppressions. Thou hast been our Shield against dangers, our security in the times of trouble: When we were pursued to the Red-sea, it was not a Creature delivered us; and when we feared the pinching of our Bowels in the Desert, it was no Creature rain'd *Manna* upon us. Thou hast been our dwelling place; Thou hast kept open house for us, sheltered us against storms, and preserved us from mischief, as a house doth an Inhabitant from wind and weather; and that not in one or two, but in all Generations: Some think



an allusion is here made to the Ark, to which they were to have recourse in all emergencies. Our refuge and defence hath not been from created things; not from the Ark, but from the God of the Ark.

Observe,

\* Theodoret in  
loc.

1. *God is a perpetual refuge and security to his People.* His Providence is not confin'd to one Generation; 'tis not one Age only that tastes of his bounty and compassion: His eye never yet slept, nor hath he suffered the little Ship of his Church to be swallowed up, though it hath been tost upon the waves: He hath always been an Haven to preserve us, a House to secure us; He hath alway had compassions to pity us, and power to protect us; He hath had a Face to shine, when the world hath had an angry Countenance to frown; \* He brought *Enoch* home by an extraordinary translation from a brutish world; and when he was resolv'd to reckon with men for their brutish lives, he lodged *Noah*, the *Phoenix* of the world, in an Ark, and kept him alive as a spark in the midst of many waters, whereby to rekindle a Church in the world: In all Generations he is a dwelling place, to secure his people here, or entertain them above.

His Providence is not wearied, nor his Care fainting: He never wanted Will to relieve us, *For he hath been our refuge*; Nor ever can want Power to support us; *for he is a God from everlasting to everlasting.* The Church never wanted a Pilot to steer her, and a Rock to shelter her, and dash in pieces the waves which threaten her.

2. *How worthy is it to remember former benefits, when we come to beg for new?* Never were the Records of Gods mercies so exactly revised, as when his people have stood in need of new Editions of his Power. How necessary are our wants to stir us up to pay the rent of thankfulness in arrear? He renders himself doubly unworthy of the mercies he wants, that doth not gratefully acknowledge the mercies he hath received. God scarce promised any deliverance to the *Israelites*, and they in their distress scarce prayed for any deliverance, but that from *Egypt* was mentioned on both sides; by God to encourage them, and by them to acknowledge their confidence in him. The greater our dangers, the more we should call to mind Gods former kindness. We are not only thankfully to acknowledge the mercies bestowed upon our persons, or in our age, but those of former times. Thou hast been our dwelling place in all Generations.

*Moses* was not living in the former Generations, yet he appropriates the former mercies to the present age. Mercies as well Generations proceed out of the loyns of those that have gon before. All Man-kind are but one *Adam*; the whole Church but one Body.

In the *second verse* he backs his former consideration.

1. *By the greatness of his Power in forming the world.*

2. *By the boundlessness of his duration; From everlasting to everlasting.* As thou hast been our dwelling place, and expended upon us the strength of thy power, and riches of thy love; so we have no reason to doubt the continuance on thy part, if we be not wanting on our parts; For the vast Mountains, and fruitful Earth are the works of thy hands; and there is less power requisite for our relief, than there was for their Creation; and though so much strength hath been upon various occasions manifested, yet thy Arm is not weakned; for from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God\*.

\* *Strong.*

\* *Amyrald in  
loc.*

\* Thou hast always been God, and no time can be assign'd as the beginning of thy Being: The mountains are not of so long a standing as thy self; they are the effects of thy power, and therefore cannot be equal to thy duration; since they are effects, they suppose a precedency of their cause. If we would look back, we can reach no further than the beginning of the Creation, and account the years from the first foundation of the world; but after that we must lose our selves in the Abyss of *Eternity*; we have no Cue to guide our thoughts; we can see no bounds in thy Eternity: But as for Man he travelfeth the world a few days, and by thy order pronounced concerning all men, returns to the Dust, and moulders into the Grave.

By Mountains, some understand Angels, as being Creatures of a more elevated Nature: By Earth, they understand humane Nature, the Earth being the habitation of Men. There is no need to divert in this place, from the Letter to such a sense.

The



The description seems to be Poetical, and amounts to this; He neither began with the beginning of Time, nor will expire with the End of it: \* He did not begin when he made himself known to our Fathers; but his Being did precede the Creation of the World; before any created Being was formed, and any time settled.

\* ἀνερχομένη  
ἀτελείωτη  
Theodoret in  
loc.

Before the Mountains were brought forth, Or before they were begotten or born; The word being used in those senses in Scripture; before they stood up higher than the rest of the earthly Mass God had created. It seems that Mountains were not casually cast up by the force of the Deluge, softning the Ground, and driving several parcels of it together, to grow up into a massy body, as the Sea doth the Sand in several places; but they were at first formed by God.

The Eternity of God is here described.

1. In his Priority [Before the world.]

2. In the extension of his duration. [From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.]

He was before the world, yet he neither began nor ends: He is not a Temporary, but an Eternal God: It takes in both parts of Eternity, what was before the Creation of the world, and what is after: Though the Eternity of God be one permanent state without succession, yet the Spirit of God suiting himself to the weakness of our conception, divides it into two parts, one past before the foundation of the world, another to come after the destruction of the world; as he did exist before all ages, and as he will exist after all ages.

Many Truths lye coucht in the verse.

1. The World hath a beginning of being. It was not from Eternity, it was once nothing; had it been of a very long duration, some Records would have remained of some memorable actions done of a longer date than any extant.

2. The world owes its Being to the creating Power of God. [Thou hadst formed it] out of nothing into being, Thou, that is God; it could not spring into being of itself; it was nothing; it must have a Former.

3. God was in being before the world. The Cause must be before the Effect; that Word which gives Being must be before that which receives Being.

4. This Being was from Eternity. [From Everlasting]

5. This Being shall endure to Eternity. [To Everlasting]

6. There is but one God, one Eternal. [From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.] None else but one hath the Property of Eternity; the Gods of the Heathen cannot lay claim to it.

Doct. God is of an eternal duration. The Eternity of God is the foundation of the stability of the Covenant, the great comfort of a Christian. The design of God in Scripture is to set forth his dealing with men in the way of a Covenant. The Priority of God before all things begins the Bible: In the beginning God created. His Covenant can have no foundation, but in his duration before and after the world:

\* Gen. 1. 1.

\* Calv. in loc.

\* And Moses here mentions his Eternity; not only with respect to the Essence of God, but to his fadernal Providence: As he is the dwelling place of his People in all Generations. The duration of God for ever, is more spoken of in Scripture than his Eternity à parte ante, though that is the foundation of all the comfort we can take from his Immortality: If he had a beginning, he might have an end; and so all our happiness, hope and being would expire with him; but the Scripture sometimes takes notice of his being without beginning, as well as without end. \* Thou art from everlasting. \* Blessed be God from everlasting to everlasting: \* I was set up from everlasting: If his Wisdom were from everlasting, himself was from everlasting: Whether we understand it of Christ the Son of God, or of the essential wisdom of God, 'tis all one to the present purpose. The Wisdom of God supposeth the Essence of God, as habits in Creatures suppose the being of some power or faculty as their Subject. The Wisdom of God supposeth Mind and Understanding, Essence and Substance.

\* Psal. 93. 2.

\* Psal. 41. 13.

\* Prov. 8. 23.

The notion of Eternity is difficult, as Austin said \* of Time; If no man will ask me the question what time is; I know well enough what it is: But if any ask me what it is, I know not how to explain it: So may I say of Eternity; 'tis easie in the word pronounced, but hardly understood, and more hardly exprest; 'tis better exprest by negative than positive words.

\* Confes. lib. 11.

Confes. 14.

Though we cannot comprehend Eternity, yet we may comprehend that there is an



an Eternity ; as, though we cannot comprehend the Essence of God what he is, yet we may comprehend that he is ; we may understand the notion of his Existence, though we cannot understand the infiniteness of his Nature ; Yet we may better understand Eternity than Infiniteness ; we can better conceive a time with the addition of numberless days and years, than imagin a Being without bounds ; whence the *Apostle* joyns his Eternity with his Power ; \* *His eternal Power and God-head* ; Because next to the Power of God apprehended in the Creature, we come necessarily by reasoning to acknowledge the Eternity of God. He that hath an incomprehensible Power, must needs have an Eternity of Nature : His Power is most sensible in the Creatures to the eye of Man, and his Eternity easily from thence deducible by the reason of Man.

\* Rom. 1. 20.

\* *Molin. Cod.*  
1. Ser. 2. P. 52.

*Eternity is a perpetual duration, which hath neither beginning nor end* : Time hath both. Those things we say are in time, that have beginning, grow up by degrees, have succession of parts : Eternity is contrary to Time, and is therefore a permanent and immutable state ; a perfect possession of life without any variation : It comprehends in it self all years, all ages, all periods of ages ; It never begins ; it endures after every duration of time, and never ceaseth ; it doth as much out-run time, as it went before the beginning of it : Time supposeth something before it, but there can be nothing before Eternity ; it were not then Eternity. Time hath a continual succession ; the former time passeth away, and another succeeds ; the last year is not this year, nor this year the next. We must conceive of Eternity contrary to the notion of time ; As the nature of time consists in the succession of parts, so the Nature of Eternity in an infinite immutable duration. \* Eternity and Time differ as the Sea and Rivers ; the Sea never changes place, and is always one water ; but the Rivers glide along, and are swallowed up in the Sea ; so is time by eternity.

A thing is said to be *eternal*, or *everlasting* rather, in Scripture.

\* Gen. 17. 13.

1. *When it is of a long duration, though it will have an end* ; When it hath no measures of time determined to it ; so Circumcision is said to be in the Flesh for an *everlasting Covenant* ; \* not purely everlasting, but so long as that administration of the Covenant should endure.

\* Deut. 15. 17.

\* Levit. 6. 20.

\* Gen. 17. 8.

And so when a Servant would not leave his Master, but would have his ear boared ; 'tis said, he should be a Servant *for ever*,\* i. e. till the *Jubilee*, which was every fiftieth year : So the Meat-offering they were to offer, is said to be *Perpetual* : \* *Canaan* is said to be given to *Abraham* for an *everlasting* possession : \* When as the *Jews* are expelled from *Canaan*, which is given a Prey to the barbarous Nations. Indeed Circumcision was not everlasting ; yet the substance of the Covenant whereof this was a sign, viz. that God would be the God of Believers, endures for ever ; and that Circumcision of the heart which was signified by Circumcision of the flesh, shall remain for ever in the Kingdom of Glory : It was not so much the lasting of the sign, as of the thing signified by it, and the Covenant sealed by it : The sign had its abolition, so that the *Apostle* is so peremptory in it, that he asserts, that if any went about to establish it, he excluded himself from a participation of Christ. \* The Sacrifices were to be perpetual, in regard of the thing signified by them, viz. the death of Christ, which was to endure in the efficacy of it : And the Passover was to be for ever, \* in regard of the Redemption signified by it, which was to be of everlasting remembrance. *Canaan* was to be an everlasting possession in regard of the glory of Heaven typified, to be for ever conferr'd upon the spiritual Seed of *Abraham*.

\* Gal. 5. 2.

\* Exod. 12. 24.

2. *When a thing hath no end, though it hath a beginning*. So Angels, and Souls are everlasting ; though their being shall never cease, yet there was a time when their being began ; they were nothing before they were something, though they shall never be nothing again, but shall live in endless happiness or misery.

But that properly is eternal, that hath neither beginning nor end ; and thus Eternity is a Property of God. In this Doctrine I shall shew

1. How God is eternal, or in what respects Eternity is his Property.
2. That he is eternal, and must needs be so.
3. That Eternity is only proper to God, and not common to him with any Creature.
4. The Use.



1. *How God is eternal, or in what respects he is so.* Eternity is a Negative Attribute, and is a denying of God any measures of time, as Immenity is a denying of him any bounds of place; As Immenity is the diffusion of his Essence, so Eternity is the duration of his Essence: And when we say God is eternal, we exclude from him all possibility of beginning and ending, all flux and change: As the Essence of God cannot be bounded by any place, so it is not to be limited by any time; as it is his Immenity to be every where, so it is his Eternity to be alway. \* As created things are said to be somewhere in regard of place, and to be present, past or future, in regard of time; so the Creator in regard of place, is everywhere; in regard of time, is *semper*: \* His duration is as endless, as his Essence is boundless; He always was and always will be, and will no more have an End than he had a Beginning; and this is an excellency belonging to the Supreme Being: \* As his Essence comprehends all beings and exceeds them, and his Immenity surmounts all places; so his Eternity comprehends all times, all durations, and infinitely excels them.

\* Gen. 1.

\* Collat. de Deo. cap. 13. p. 41. \* Lingard Tom. 2. p. 495.

1. *God is without beginning.*

*In the beginning* God created the World: God was then before the beginning of it; and what point can be set wherein God began, if he were before the beginning of created things? God was without beginning, though all other things had time and beginning from him. As Unity is before all Numbers, so is God before all his Creatures. *Abraham* called upon the name of the *everlasting* God; \* The eternal God: \* Tis opposed to the Heathen Gods, which were but of *Yesterday*, new coyn'd, and so new; but the Eternal God, was before the world was made: In that sense it is to be understood, \* *The Mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest; and by the Scriptures of the Prophets according to the Command of the everlasting God, made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith.* The Gospel is not preached by the Command of a new and temporary God, but of that God that was before all Ages; though the manifestation of it be in time, yet the purpose and resolve of it was from Eternity.

\* Gen. 1. 1.

\* Gen. 21. 33.

אלהים עולם

\* Rom. 16. 26.

If there were *Decrees* before the foundation of the World, there was a *Decree* before the foundation of the World: Before the foundation of the world he lov'd *Christ* as a Mediator: \* A fore-ordination of him was before the foundation of the world; a Choice of men, and therefore a Chooser before the foundation of the world; a *Grace given in Christ* before the world began, \* and therefore a Donor of that Grace. From those places saith *Crellius*, it appears that God was before the foundation of the world, but they do not assert an absolute Eternity; \* But to be before all Creatures, is equivalent to his Being from Eternity. Time began with the foundation of the world, but God being before time, could have no beginning in time: Before the beginning of the Creation, and the beginning of Time, there could be nothing but *Eternity*; nothing but what was uncreated, that is nothing but what was *without beginning*. To be in time, is to have a beginning; to be before all time, is never to have a beginning, but always to be: For as between the Creator and Creatures there is no Medium, so between Time and Eternity, there is no Medium. 'Tis as easily deduced, that he that was before all Creatures is Eternal, as he that made all Creatures is God: If he had a beginning, he must have it from another, or from himself; if from another, that from whom he received his Being would be better than he, so more a God than he. He cannot be God, that is not Supreme; he cannot be Supreme that owes his Being to the Power of another: He would not be said *only* to have Immortality as he is, \* if he had it dependent upon another; nor could he have a beginning from himself; if he had given beginning to himself, then he was once nothing, there was a time when he was not; if he was not, how could he be the Cause of himself? 'Tis impossible for any, to give a Beginning and Being to it self: If it acts, it must exist; and so exist, before it existed: A thing would exist as a Cause, before it existed as an Effect. He that is not, cannot be the Cause that he is; If therefore God doth exist, and hath not his Being from another, he must exist from Eternity: Therefore when we say God is of and from himself, we mean not that God gave Being to himself; but it is negatively to be understood, that he hath no cause of Existence without himself.

\* John 17. 24.

\* Eph. 1. 4.

\* 2 Tim. 1. 9.

\* Coccei Sum. p. 48. Theol. Gerhard. Exe. ges. cap. 25. 4. p. 255.

\* 1 Tim. 6. 16.

Whatsoever Number of Millions of Millions of Years we can imagin before the Creati-



Creation of the World, yet God was infinitely before those; he is therefore called the Ancient of Days,\* as being before all days and time, and eminently containing in himself all times and ages: Though indeed God cannot properly be called ancient, that will testify that he is decaying, and shortly will not be; no more than he can be called young, which would signify that he was not long before. All created things are new and fresh; but no Creature can find out any beginning of God: 'Tis impossible there should be any beginning of him.

2. *God is without end.* He always was, always is, and always will be what he is; He remains always the same in Being; so far from any *change*, that *no shadow* of it can touch him: \* He will continue in being, as long as he hath already enjoy'd it; and if we could add never so many Millions of years together, we are still as far from an end, as from a beginning; for *the Lord shall endure for ever*: \* As it is impossible he should not be, being from all Eternity; so it is impossible that he should not be to all Eternity. The Scripture is most plentiful in testimonies of this Eternity of God, *à parte post*, or after the Creation of the world: He is said to *live for ever*. \* The Earth shall *perish*, but God shall *endure for ever*, and his *years shall have no end*. Plants and Animals grow up from small beginnings; arrive to their full growth and decline again, and have always remarkable alterations in their nature; But there is no declination in God by all the revolutions of time: Hence some think the incorruptibility of the Deity was signified by the *Shittim*, or Cedar wood, whereof the Ark was made, it being of an incorruptible nature\*.

That which had no beginning of duration can never have an end, or any interruptions in it. Since God never depended upon any, what should make him cease to be what eternally he hath been, or put a stop to the continuance of his perfections? He cannot will his own destruction, that is against universal nature in all things to cease from being, if they can preserve themselves. He cannot desert his own Being, because he cannot but love himself as the best and chiefest good. The reason that any thing decays, is either its own native weakness, or a superior Power of something contrary to it: \* There is no weakness in the nature of God that can introduce any Corruption, because he is infinitely simple without any mixture; Nor can he be overpowered by any thing else; a weaker cannot hurt him, and a stronger than he there cannot be; Nor can he be outwitted or circumvented, because of his infinite Wisdom: As he received his Being from none, so he cannot be deprived of it by any; As he doth necessarily exist, so he doth necessarily always exist: This indeed is the Property of God; nothing so proper to him, as always to be. Whatsoever perfections any Being hath, if it be *not eternal*, it is *not divine*. God *only* is immortal; \* he only is so by a necessity of nature: Angels, Souls and Bodies too, after the Resurrection shall be immortal; not by nature but grant; they are subject to return to nothing, if that word that raised them from nothing should speak them into nothing again: 'Tis as easie with God to strip them of it, as to invest them with it; nay, it is impossible but that they should perish, if God should withdraw his Power from preserving them, which he exerted in creating them: But God is immoveably fixed in his own Being; that as none gave him his Life, so none can deprive him of his Life, or the least particle of it; not a jot of the happiness and life, which God infinitely possesses, can be lost: It will be as durable to everlasting, as it hath been possessed from everlasting.

3. *There is no succession in God.* God is without succession or change; 'Tis a part of Eternity; *From everlasting to everlasting* he is God, i. e. the same. God doth not only always remain in Being, but he always remains the same in that Being, \* *Thou art the same*. The Being of Creatures is successive; the Being of God is permanent, and remains intire with all its perfections unchanged in an infinite duration: Indeed the first notion of Eternity is to be without beginning and end, which notes to us the duration of a Being in regard of its Existence; but to have no succession, nothing first or last, notes rather the perfection of a Being in regard of its Essence.

The Creatures are in a perpetual Flux; something is acquired, or something lost every day. A Man is the same in regard of Existence when he is a Man, as he was when he was a Child; but there is a new succession of quantities and qualities in him; every day he acquires something till he comes to his maturity; every day he loseth some-

\* Dan. 7. 9.

\* James 1. 17.

\* Psal. 9. 7.

\* Rev. 4. 9, 10.

\* Psal. 102. 27.

\* Exod. 25. 10.

\* Crellius de  
Deo cap. 18.  
p. 41.\* 1 Tim. 6. 16.  
Daille in loc.

\* Psal. 102. 27.



something till he comes to his Period. A Man is not the same at night that he was in the morning; something is expir'd, and something is added; every day there is a change in his age, a change in his substance, a change in his accidents: But God hath his whole Being in one and the same point, or moment of Eternity; He receives nothing as an Addition to what he was before; He looſeth nothing of what he was before; He is always the ſame excellency and perfection in the ſame infinite-  
neſs as ever; His years do *not fail*,\* his years do not come and go as others do; there is not this day, to morrow or yeſterday with him: As nothing is paſt or future with him in regard of Knowledge, but all things are preſent; ſo nothing is paſt or future in regard of his Eſſence; He is not in his Eſſence this day what he was not before, or will be the next day and year what he is not now; \* All his perfections are moſt perfect in him every moment, before all ages, after all ages; As he hath his whole Eſſence undivided in every place, as well as in an immenſe ſpace; ſo he hath all his Being in one moment of time, as well as in infinite intervalls of time. \* Some  
illustrate the difference between Eternity and Time, by the ſimilitude of a Tree, or a Rock ſtanding upon the ſide of a River, or Shoar of the Sea; the Tree ſtands always the ſame and unmoved, while the waters of the River glide along at the foot; The Flux is in the River, but the Tree acquires nothing but a diverſe reſpect and relation of preſence to the various parts of the River as they flow; The waters of the River preſon, and puſh forward one another, and what the River had this minute, it hath not the ſame the next: So are all ſublunary things in a continual Flux. And though the Angels have no ſubſtantial change, yet they have an accidental; for the actions of the Angels this day, are not the ſame individual actions which they performed yeſterday: But in God there is no change, He always remains the ſame.

\* Heb. i. 12.

\* *Leſſius* de perfect. divin. lib. 4. cap. 1.

\* *Gamaheus* in Aquin. part. 1. Qu. 10. cap. 1.

\* Of a Creature it may be ſaid, he was, or he is, or he ſhall be; Of God it cannot be ſaid, but only he is; He is what he always was, and he is what he always will be; whereas a Creature is what he was not, and will be what he is not now; As it may be ſaid of the flame of a Candle, 'tis flame; but it is not the ſame individual flame as was before, nor is it the ſame that will be preſently after; there is a continual diſſolution of it into Air, and a continual ſupply for the generation of more; While it continues, it may be ſaid there is a flame; yet not intirely one, but in a ſucceſſion of parts: So, of a Man it may be ſaid, he is in a ſucceſſion of parts; but he is not the ſame that he was, and will not be the ſame that he is: But God is the ſame without any ſucceſſion of parts and of time; of him it may be ſaid, He is; He is no more now than he was, and he ſhall be no more hereafter than he is. \* God poſſeſſes a firm and abſolute Being, always conſtant to himſelf; He ſees all things ſliding under him in a continual variation; He beholds the revolutions in the world without any change of his moſt glorious and immoveable nature: All other things paſs from one ſtate to another; from their Original, to their Eclipse and deſtruction: But God poſſeſſes his Being in one indiviſible point, having neither beginning, end nor middle,

\* *Gaſſend.* Tom. 1. Phytic. § 1. l. 2. c. 7. p. 223.

\* *Daille* Melange de Sermou p. 252.

1. *There is no ſucceſſion in the Knowledge of God.* The variety of ſucceſſions and changes in the world, make not ſucceſſion or new Objects in the Divine Mind; for all things are preſent to him from Eternity in regard of his Knowledge, though they are not actually preſent in the world in regard of their Exiſtence: He doth not know one thing now, and another anon; He ſees all things at once; *known unto God are all things from the beginning of the world*: \* But in their true order of ſucceſſion, as they lye in the eternal Council of God, to be brought forth in time. Though there be a ſucceſſion and order of things as they are wrought, yet there is no ſucceſſion in God in regard of his knowledge of them. God knows the things that ſhall be wrought, and the order of them in their being brought upon the Stage of the World; yet both the things and the order he knows by one act. Though all things be preſent with God, yet they are preſent in him in the order of their appearance in the world, and not ſo preſent with him as if they ſhould be wrought at once. The Death of Chriſt was to precede his Reſurrection in order of time; there is a ſucceſſion in this; both at once are known by God, yet the act of his knowledge is not exerciſed about Chriſt as dying, and riſing at the ſame time; ſo that there is ſucceſſion in things, when there is no ſucceſſion in God's knowledge of them. Since

\* Acts 15. 18.



God knows time, he knows all things as they are in time; He doth not know all things to be at once, though he knows at once what is, has been and will be. All things are past, present, and to come in regard of their Existence; but there is not past, present and to come in regard of Gods Knowledge of them; \* because he sees and knows not by any other, but by himself; He is his own Light by which he sees, his own Glass wherein he sees; beholding himself, he beholds all things.

\* *Parf. xfs.*

2. *There is no succession in the Decrees of God.* He doth not decree this now, which he decreed not before; for as his works were known from the beginning of the world, so his works were decreed from the beginning of the world; as they are known at once, so they are decreed at once; there is a succession in the execution of them, first grace, then glory; but the purpose of God for the bestowing of both, was in one and the same moment of Eternity. \* *He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy.* The choice of Christ, and the choice of some in him to be holy, and to be happy, were before the foundation of the world. 'Tis by the eternal Counsel of God, all things appear in time; they appear in their order according to the Counsel and Will of God from Eternity. The Redemption of the world is after the Creation of the world; but the Decree whereby the world was created, and whereby it was redeemed, was from Eternity.

\* *Eph. i. 4.*

\* *Calov. Socinian.*

*Existencia durans.*

4. *God is his own Eternity.* He is not eternal by grant, and the disposal of any other, but by Nature and Essence. \* The Eternity of God, is nothing else but the Duration of God; and the Duration of God, is nothing else but his Existence enduring. If *Eternity* were any thing distinct from God, and not of the Essence of God; then there would be something which was not God, necessary to perfect God. As Immortality is the great perfection of a rational Creature, so Eternity is the choice perfection of God, yea, the gloss and lustre of all others. Every perfection would be imperfect, if it were not always a perfection.

God is essentially whatsoever he is; and there is nothing in God but his Essence: Duration or Continuance in being in Creatures, differs from their being; for they might exist but for one instant; in which case they may be said to have being, but not duration, because all duration includes *prius, et posterius*. All Creatures may cease from being, if it be the pleasure of God; they are not therefore durable by their Essence, and therefore are not their own duration, no more than they are their own Existence. And though some Creatures, as Angels, and Souls may be called everlasting, as a perpetual life is communicated to them by God; yet they can never be called their own Eternity; because such a Duration is not simply necessary, nor essential to them, but accidental, depending upon the pleasure of another; there is nothing in their nature that can hinder them from losing it, if God, from whom they received it, should design to take it away: But as God is his own necessity of existing, so he is his own duration in existing: \* As he doth necessarily exist by himself, so he will always necessarily exist by himself.

\* *Gassend.*

5. Hence *all the perfections of God are eternal.* In regard of the Divine Eternity, all things in God are eternal, his Power, Mercy, Wisdom, Justice, Knowledge. God himself were not eternal, if any of his perfections which are essential to him were not eternal also; He had not else been a perfect God from all eternity, and so his whole self had not been eternal. If any thing belonging to the nature of a thing be wanting, it cannot be said to be that thing which it ought to be. If any thing requisite to the Nature of God had been wanting one moment, he could not have been said to be an eternal God.

The second Thing, *God is Eternal.* The Spirit of God in Scripture condescends to our Capacities in signifying the Eternity of God by *days* and *years*, which are terms belonging to time, whereby we measure it: \* But we must no more conceive that God is bounded, or measured by time, and hath succession of days because of those expressions, than we can conclude him to have a Body, because Members are ascribed to him in Scripture, to help our conceptions of his glorious nature and operations.

\* *Psal. 102. 27.*

Though years are ascribed to him; yet they are such as cannot be numbred, cannot be finished, since there is no proportion between the duration of God, and the years of Men. *The number of his years cannot be searched out; for he makes small the*

*the*



the drops of water; they pour down Rain according to the vapor thereof. \* The numbers of the drops of Rain which have fallen in all parts of the Earth since the Creation of the world, if subtracted from the number of the years of God, would be found a small quantity, a meer nothing to the years of God. As all the Nations in the world compared with God, are but as the drop of a Bucket, worse than nothing, than vanity; So all the Ages of the world, if compared with God, amount not to so much as the One hundred thousandth part of a Minute: The Minutes from the Creation may be numbered, but the years of the duration of God being infinite, are without measure.

As one day is to the Life of Man, so are a Thousand years to the Life of God: \* The Holy-Ghost expresseth himself to the capacity of Man, to give us some Notion of an infinite Duration, by a resemblance suited to the capacity of Man. If a Thousand years be but as a day to the Life of God; then as a year is to the Life of Man, so are Three hundred sixty five thousand years to the Life of God: And as Seventy years are to the Life of Man, so are twenty five Millions four Hundred and fifty Thousand years to the Life of God: Yet still, since there is no proportion between Time and Eternity, we must dart our thoughts beyond all those; \* For years and days measure only the duration of created things, and of those only that are material and corporeal, subject to the motion of the Heavens, which makes days and years.

Sometimes this Eternity is exprest by parts, as looking backward and forward; by the differences of time, *past, present and to come*, \* *which was, and is, and is to come*. Though this might be spoken of any thing in being, though but for an hour; it was the last minute, it is now, and it will be the next minute; yet the Holy-Ghost would declare something proper to God, as including all parts of time; He always was, is now, and always shall be; It might always be said of him he was, and it may always be said of him he will be: There is no time when he began, no time when he shall cease. It cannot be said of a Creature he always was, he always is what he was, and he always will be what he is: But God always is what he was, and always will be what he is; so that it is a very significant expression of the Eternity of God, as can be suited to our capacities.

1. His Eternity is evident, by the Name God gives himself. \* And God said unto Moses, *I am that I am*; thus shalt thou say to the Children of Israel, *I am hath sent me unto you*. This is the Name whereby he is distinguished from all Creatures; *I am*, is his proper Name; This description being in the Present Tense, shews that his Essence knows no past, nor future: If it were *he was*, it would intimate he were not now what he once was; If it were *he will be*, it would intimate he were not yet what he will be. But *I am*; *I am* the only Being, the root of all Beings, he is therefore at the greatest distance from not Being, and that is eternal. So that *is* signifies his Eternity, as well as his Perfection and Immutability: As *I am* speaks the want of no blessedness, so it speaks the want of no duration; and therefore the French where ever they find this word *Jehovah* in the Scripture, which we translate *Lord*, and *Lord eternal*, render it *the Eternal*. *I am* always, and immutably the same. The Eternity of God is opposed to the Volubility of Time, which is extended into past, present and to come. Our time is but a small Drop, as a Sand to all the Atoms and small particles of which the world is made; but God is an unbounded Sea of Being; *I am that I am*, i. e. an infinite Life. I have not that now, which I had not formerly; I shall not afterwards have that which I have not now; *I am* that in every moment which I was, and will be in all moments of time; Nothing can be added to me, nothing can be detracted from me: There is nothing superior to him, which can detract from him; nothing desirable that can be added to him. \* Now if there were any beginning and end of God, any succession in him, he could not be *I am*; For in regard of what was past he would not be, in regard of what was to come he is not yet: \* And upon this account, a Heathen argues well, of all Creatures it may be said they were, or they will be; but of God it cannot be said any thing else but *Est, God is*, because he fills an eternal duration: A Creature cannot be said to be, if it be not yet, nor if it be not now, but hath been.\*

God only can be called *I am*; all Creatures have more of not being than being; for every Creature was nothing from Eternity, before it was made something in time;

\* Job. 36. 26, 27

\* Isa. 40. 15.

\* Psal. 9. 6.  
Anyvald Trin.  
p. 44.\* Duille Vent.  
Sermons, Ser.  
1. sur. 102. Psal.  
27. p. 21.\* Revel. 1. 2.  
Revel. 4. 2.  
Crollius weakens this argument De Deo.  
cap. 18. p. 42.

\* Exod. 3. 14.

\* Toss. Salmo.  
p. 1. p. 145.  
Theol. 14.\* Plutarch de  
Est 1. p. 322.\* Peter. in Exo.  
3. Disput. 13.



and if it be corruptible in its whole nature, it will be nothing to Eternity after it hath been something in time; and if it be not corruptible in its nature, as the Angels; or in every part of its nature, as Man in regard of his Soul; yet it hath not properly a Being, because it is dependent upon the pleasure of God, to continue it, or deprive it of it; and while it is, it is mutable, and all mutability is a mixture of not being: If God therefore be properly *I am*, i. e. Being, it follows that he always was; for if he were not always, he must as was argued before, be produced by some other, or by himself; By another he could not, then he had not been God but a Creature; nor by himself; for then as producing, he must be before himself, as produced; he had been before he was: And he always will be, for being *I am*, having all being in himself, and the Fountain of all being to every thing else; how can he ever have his Name changed to *I am not*?

2. *God hath Life in himself*, John 5. 26. *The Father hath Life in himself*; He is the

\* Dan. 6. 26. *living God, therefore fixed fast for ever*: \* He hath Life by his Essence, not by Participation; He is a Sun to give Light and Life to all Creatures, but receives not Light or Life from any thing; and therefore he hath an unlimited Life, not a drop of life but a fountain, not a spark of a limited life but a life transcending all bounds: He hath life in himself: All Creatures have their life in him and from him. He that hath life in himself doth necessarily exist, and could never be made to exist; for then he had not life in himself, but in that which made him to exist, and gave him life; What doth necessarily exist therefore, exists from Eternity; what hath being of it self, could never be produced in time, could not want being one moment, because it hath being from its Essence without influence of any efficient cause.

\* Petav. Theol. Dogm. Tom. I. lib. I. c. 6. § 6, 7.

\* When God pronounced his Name, *I am that I am*, Angels and Men were in being; the world had been created above two thousand four hundred years; *Moses* to whom he then speaks, was in being; yet, God only *is*, because he only hath the fountain of being in himself, but all that they were, was a rivulet from him; He hath from nothing else, that he doth subsist; every thing else hath its subsistence from him as their root, as the Beam from the Sun, as the Rivers and Fountains from the Sea. All life is seated in God, as in its proper Throne; in its most perfect Purity. God is Life; 'tis in him originally, radically, therefore eternally: He is a pure act, nothing but vigor and act; He hath by his nature that life, which others have by his grant; whence the *Apostle* saith, \* not only that he is immortal, but he *hath immortality* in a full possession; fee-simple, not depending upon the Will of another, but containing all things within himself. He that hath life in himself, and is from himself, cannot but be: He always was, because he received his being from no other, and none can take away that being which was not given by another. \* If there were any space before he did exist, then there was something which made him to exist; Life would not then be in him, but in that which produced him into being; He could not then be God, but that other which gave him being, would be God. And to say, God sprung into being by chance, when we see nothing in the world that is brought forth by chance, but hath some cause of its existence, would be vain; for since God is a Being, Chance which is nothing, could not bring forth something; and by the same reason that he sprung up by chance, he might totally vanish by chance. What a strange notion of a God would this be, Such a God that had no life in himself, but from chance?

\* Amyrald de Trinit. p. 48.

Since he hath life in himself, and that there was no cause of his existence; he can have no cause of his limitation, and can no more be determined to a time, than he can to a place. What hath life in it self, hath life without bounds, and can never desert it, nor be deprived of it: So that he lives necessarily, and it is absolutely impossible that he should not live; whereas all other things *live*, and *move*, and have their *being in him*\*; and as they live by his Will, so they can return to nothing at his Word.

\* Acts 17. 28.

3. *If God were not eternal, he were not immutable in his nature*. 'Tis contrary to the nature of immutability to be without eternity; for whatsoever begins, is changed in its passing from not being to being: It began to be what it was not, and if it ends, it ceaseth to be what it was; It cannot therefore be said to be God, If there were either beginning or ending, or succession in it, *Mal. 3. 6. I am the Lord, I change not*, *Job. 37. 23. (Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.)* God argues here saith *Calvin*, from his unchangeable nature as *Jeheva*, to his immutability



ty in his purpose : Had he not been eternal, there had been the greatest change from nothing to something : A change of Essence, is greater than a change of purpose. God is a Sun glittering always in the same glory ; No growing up in Youth ; no passing on to Age : If he were not without succession, standing in one point of Eternity, there would be a change from past to present, from present to future. The Eternity of God is a Shield against all kind of mutability. If any thing sprang up in the Essence of God that was not there before, he could not be said to be either an eternal, or an unchanged Substance.

4. *God could not be an infinitely perfect Being, if he were not eternal.* A finite duration is inconsistent with infinite perfection. Whatsoever is contracted within the limits of time, cannot swallow up all perfections in it self. God hath an unsearchable perfection. \* *Canst thou by searching find out God ; canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection ?* He cannot be found out, He is infinite, because he is incomprehensible : Incomprehensibility ariseth from an infinite perfection, which cannot be fathom'd by the short line of Man's Understanding : His Essence in regard of its diffusion, and in regard of its duration, is incomprehensible as well as his action : If God therefore had beginning, he could not be infinite ; if not infinite, he did not possess the highest perfection, because a perfection might be conceived beyond it ; If his Being could fail, he were not perfect : Can that deserve the name of the highest perfection, which is capable of corruption and dissolution ? To be finite and limited, is the greatest imperfection, for it consists in a denial of being. He could not be the most blessed Being, if he were not always so, and should not for ever remain to be so ; and whatsoever perfections he had, would be sowed by the thoughts, that in time they would cease ; and so could not be pure perfections, because not permanent ; But *He is blessed from everlasting to everlasting.* \* *Had he a beginning, he could not have all perfection without limitation ; he would have been limited by that which gave him beginning ; that which gave him being would be God, and not himself, and so more perfect than he : But since God is the most sovereign perfection, than which nothing can be imagined perfecter by the most capacious understanding, He is certainly eternal ; being infinite, nothing can be added to him, nothing detracted from him.*

5. *God could not be Omnipotent, Almighty, if he were not Eternal.* The title of *Almighty*, agrees not with a nature that had a beginning ; whatsoever hath a beginning was once nothing, and when it was nothing could act nothing. Where there is no being, there is no power ; Neither doth the title of *Almighty* agree with a perishing nature : He can do nothing to purpose, that cannot preserve himself against the outward force and violence of Enemies, or against the inward causes of corruption and dissolution. No account is to be made of Man, because *his breath is in his Nostrils* ; \* *Could a better account be made of God, if he were of the like condition ?* He could not properly be almighty, that were not *always mighty* : If he be omnipotent, nothing can impair him ; He that hath all power, can have no hurt : \* *If he doth whatsoever he pleaseth, nothing can make him miserable, since misery consists in those things which happen against our will.* The Almightyness and Eternity of God are linked together : \* *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and Ending saith the Lord, which was, and which is, and which is to come, the Almighty :* \* *Almighty because Eternal, and Eternal because Almighty.*

6. *God would not be the first Cause of all if he were not Eternal ; But he is the first, and the last ; the first cause of all things, the last end of all things* : \* *That which is the first cannot begin to be, it were not then the first ; it cannot cease to be : Whatsoever is dissolved, is dissolved into that whereof it doth consist, which was before it, and then it was not the first.* \* *The world might not have been, it was once nothing ; it must have some cause to call it out of nothing ; Nothing hath no power to make it self something, there is a superior Cause, by whose Will and Power it comes into Being, and so gives all the Creatures their distinct forms.*

This Power cannot but be eternal ; it must be before the world ; the *Founder* must be before the *Foundation* ; \* *and his Existence must be from Eternity, or we must say nothing did exist from Eternity : And if there were no being from Eternity, there could not now be any being in time : What we see, and what we are, must arise from*

\* Job. 11. 7.

\* Psal. 41. 13.

\* Isa. 2. 22.

\* Foot. Natural. Theol. p. 310.

\* Rev. 1. 2.

\* Rev. 1. 2. *Fin. de Immortal. 2. cap. 5.*

\* Coccei Sum. Theol. cap. 8.

\* Crollius de Deo cap. 12. p. 43.



from it self or some other; it cannot from it self: If any thing made it self, it had a power to make it self; it then had an active power before it had a being; It was something in regard of Power, and was nothing in regard of Existence at the same time: Suppose it had a Power to produce it self, this power must be conferred upon it by another; and so the power of producing it self, was not from it self, but from another; But if the power of being was from it self, why did it not produce it self before? Why was it one moment out of being? \* If there be any existence of things, 'tis necessary that that which was the *first Cause*, should *exist from Eternity*. Whatsoever was the immediate Cause of the world, yet the first and chief Cause wherein we must rest, must have nothing before it; if it had any thing before it, it were not the *first*; He therefore that is the first Cause must be without beginning, nothing must be before him; If he had a beginning from some other, he could not be the first Principle and Author of all things; If he be the first Cause of all things, he must give himself a beginning, or be from Eternity: He could not give himself a beginning; whatsoever begins in time was nothing before, and when it was nothing it could do nothing; it could not give it self any thing, for then it gave what it had not, and did what it could not: If he made himself in time, why did he not make himself before? What hindered him? It was either because he could not, or because he would not; if he could not, he always wanted power, and always would, unless it were bestowed upon him, and then he could not be said to be from himself? If he would not make himself before, then he might have made himself when he would: How had he the power of willing and nilling without a Being? Nothing cannot will or nill; Nothing hath no faculties: So that it is necessary to grant some eternal Being, or run into inextricable Labyrinths and Mazes. If we deny some eternal being, we must deny all being; our own being, the being of every thing about us; unconceivable absurdities will arise.

So then if God were the Cause of all things, He did exist before all things, and that from Eternity.

\* Bapt.

The third thing is, *Eternity is only proper to God, and not communicable*. \* 'Tis as great a madness to ascribe Eternity to the Creature, as to deprive the Lord of the Creature of Eternity. 'Tis so proper to God, that when the *Apostle* would prove the Deity of Christ, he proves it by his immutability and eternity, as well as his creating power: \* *Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail*. The Argument had not strength, if Eternity belonged essentially to any but God; and therefore he is said only to have *Immortality*\*: All other things receive their being from him, and can be deprived of their being by him: All things depend on him, he of none: All other things are like Clothes, which would consume if God preserved them not. Immortality is appropriated to God, *i. e.* an *independent Immortality*. Angels and Souls have an Immortality, but by donation from God, not by their own Essence; dependent upon their Creator, not necessary in their own nature: God might have annihilated them after he had created them; so that their duration cannot properly be called an Eternity, it being extrinsecal to them, and depending upon the will of their Creator, by whom they may be extinguished: It is not an absolute and necessary, but a precarious Immortality. Whatsoever is not God, is temporary: Whatsoever is eternal, is God.

\* Heb. i. 10, 11, 12.

\* 1 Tim. 6. 16.

'Tis a contradiction to say a Creature can be eternal; as nothing eternal is created, so nothing created is eternal. What is distinct from the nature of God cannot be eternal, Eternity being the Essence of God. Every Creature in the notion of a Creature speaks a dependence on some Cause, and therefore cannot be eternal. \* As it is repugnant to the nature of God not to be eternal, so it is repugnant to the nature of a Creature to be eternal; for then a Creature would be equal to the Creator, and the Creator or the Cause would not be before the Creature or Effect.

\* Lessius de Perfect. l. 4. c. 2.

It would be all one to admit many Gods, as many Eternals; and all one to say God can be created, as to say a Creature can be uncreated, which is to be eternal.

1. *Creation is a producing something from nothing*. What was once nothing, cannot therefore be eternal; not being was eternal; therefore its being could not be eternal, for it should be then before it was, and would be something when it was nothing. 'Tis the nature of a Creature to be nothing, before it was created; what

was



was nothing before it was, cannot be equal with God in an Eternity of Duration.

2. *There is no Creature but is mutable*, therefore not eternal. As it had a change from nothing to something, so it may be changed from being to not being. If the Creature were not mutable it would be most perfect, and so would not be a Creature but God; for God only is most perfect: 'Tis as much the Essence of a Creature to be mutable, as it is the Essence of God to be immutable: Mutability and Eternity are utterly inconsistent.

3. *No Creature is infinite*, therefore not eternal. To be infinite in Duration is all one, as to be infinite in Essence: \* 'Tis as reasonable to conceive a Creature

\* Ieffius de  
Perfect. l. 4. c. 2.

imense, filling all places at once, as eternal, extended to all ages; because neither can be without infiniteness, which is the Property of the Deity. A Creature may as well be without bounds of place, as limitations of time.

4. *No effect of an intellectual free Agent, can be equal in duration to its Cause.* The Productions of natural Agents are as antient often as themselves; the Sun produceth a Beam as old in time as its self; But who ever heard of a piece of wise Workmanship as old as the wise Artificer? God produced a Creature, not necessarily and naturally, as the Sun doth a Beam, but freely, as an intelligent Agent. The Sun was not necessary; it might be or not be, according to the pleasure of God. \* A free act of the Will is necessary, to precede in order of time as the Cause of such effects as are purely voluntary. Those Causes that act as soon as they exist, act naturally, necessarily, not freely, and cannot cease from acting.

\* Cyellius de  
Deo cap. 18.  
p. 43.

But suppose a Creature might have existed by the Will of God from Eternity; yet, as some think, it could not be said absolutely, and in its own nature to be eternal; because Eternity was not of the Essence of it. The Creature could not be its own Duration; for though it were from Eternity, it might not have been from Eternity, because its Existence depended upon the free Will of God, who might have chose, whether he would have created it or no.

God only is eternal, the *first* and the *last*, the *beginning* and the *end*; who, as he subsisted before any Creature had a being, so he will eternally subsist if all Creatures were reduced to nothing.

#### IV. Use.

##### 1. Information.

1. If God be of an eternal duration, then *Christ is God*: Eternity is the Property of God, but it is ascribed to Christ; *He is before all things*, \* i. e. all created things: He is therefore no Creature; and if no Creature, eternal. *All things were created by him*, both in Heaven and in Earth, Angels as well as Men, \* whether they be Thrones or Dominions: If all things were his Creatures, then he is no Creature; if he were, all things were not created by him, or he must create himself.

\* Col. 1. 17.

\* Col. 1. 16.

He hath no difference of time; *for he is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*; \* The same, with the Name of God, *I am*, which signifies his Eternity; He is no more to day than he was yesterday, nor will be any other to morrow than he is to day; And therefore *Melchisedeck* whose Descent, Birth and Death, Father and Mother, Beginning and End of days are not upon Record, was a Type of the Existence of Christ without difference of time. \* *Having neither beginning of Days nor end of Life, but made like the Son of God.* The suppression of his Birth and Death, was intended by the Holy-Ghost as a Type of the excellency of Christ's person in regard of his Eternity, and the duration of his Charge in regard of his Priest-hood. As there was an appearance of an Eternity in the suppression of the Race of *Melchisedeck*, so there is a true Eternity in the Son of God. How could the Eternity of the Son of God be expressed by any resemblance so well, as by such a suppression of the *Beginning* and *End* of this great Person, different from the custom of the Spirit of God in the Old-Testament, who often records the Generations and Ends of holy Men; and why might not this, which was a kind of a shadow of Eternity, be a representation of the true Eternity of Christ, as well as the restoration of *Iaac* to his Father without death, is said to be a figure of the Resurrection of Christ after a real death? *Melchisedeck* is only mentioned once (without any record of his extraction) in his appearance to *Abraham* after his victory, as if he came from Heaven only for that action, and instantly disappeared again, as if he had been an eternal person.

\* Heb. 13. 8.  
Rev. 1. 8. *He which is, and which was, and which is to come.*

\* Heb. 7. 3.

\* *Melchisedeck* in loc.

And



And Christ himself hints his own eternity, *\* I came forth from the Father and am come into the world, again I leave the world and go to the Father.* He goes to the Father as he came from the Father; He goes to the Father, *for everlasting*, so he came from the Father *from everlasting*; there is the same duration in coming forth from the Father, as in returning to the Father. But more plainly; *\* He speaks of a Glory that he had with the Father before the world was*, when there was no Creature in being; this is an actual glory, and not only in Decree: For a decreed glory Believers had, and why may not every one of them say the same words, *Father glorify me with that glory which I had with thee before the world was*, if it were only a glory in decree? Nay, it may be said of every man, he was before the world was, because he was so in decree. Christ speaks of something peculiar to him, a Glory in actual possession before the world was; glorify me, embrace, honour me as thy Son, whereas I have now been in the eyes of the world handled disgracefully as a Servant: If it were only in decree, why is not the like expression used of others in Scripture as well as of Christ? Why did he not use the same words for his Disciples that were then with him, who had a glory in decree? His Eternity is also mentioned in the Old-Testament: *\* The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old.* If he were the work of God, he existed before himself, if he existed before all the works of God; 'tis so not properly meant of the essential wisdom of God, since the discourse runs in the name of a Person; and several passages there are which belong not so much to the essential wisdom of God, as *v. 13. The evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate*; which belongs rather to the holiness of God, than to the essential wisdom of God; besides it is distinguished from *Jehovah*, as possessed by him, and *rejoicing before him*. Yet plainer, *\* Out of thee i. e. Bethlehem shall he come forth to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting* מִיְּעוֹלָם from the ways of Eternity. There are two goings forth of Christ described, one from *Bethlehem* in the days of his incarnation, and another from *Eternity*. The Holy-Ghost adds after his prediction of his incarnation, his going out from ever-lasting, that none should doubt of his Deity: If this going out from everlasting were only in the purpose of God, it might be said of *David*, and of every Creature: And in *Isa. 9. 6.* He is particularly called the *Everlasting*, or *Eternal Father*; Not the Father in the Trinity, but a Father to us; yet eternal, the Father of Eternity. As he is the mighty God, so he is the everlasting Father: Can such a title be ascribed to any, whose being depends upon the Will of another, and may be dashed out at the pleasure of a Superior?

As the *Eternity* of God is the ground of all Religion, so the Eternity of Christ is the ground of the Christian Religion: Could our Sins be perfectly expiated, had he not an eternal Divinity to answer for the offences committed against an eternal God? Temporary sufferings had been of little validity, without an infiniteness and eternity in his person to add weight to his passion.

2. *If God be eternal, he knows all things as present.* *\* All things are present to him in his Eternity*; for this is the notion of Eternity, to be without succession. If Eternity be one indivisible point, and is not diffused into preceding and succeeding parts, then that which is known in it or by it, is perceived without any succession; For knowledge is as the substance of the person knowing; if that hath various actions and distinct from it self, then it understands things in differences of time as time presents them to view: But, since Gods Being depends not upon the revolutions of time, so neither doth his Knowledge; it exceeds all motions of years and days, comprehends infinite spaces of past and future. God considers all things in his Eternity in one simple knowledge, as if they were now acted before him: *\* Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world* 'אֵין אֵין אֵין à seculo; from eternity. Gods Knowledge is coeternal with him: If he knows that in time which he did not know from eternity, he would not be eternally perfect, since knowledge is the perfection of an intelligent nature.

3. *How bold and foolish is it for a mortal Creature, to censure the Counsels and Actions of an eternal God, or be too curious in his inquiries?* 'Tis by the consideration of the unsearchable number of the years of God that *Elihu* checks too bold enquiries: *Who hath enjoined him his way, or who can say, thou hast wrought iniquity? Behold, God is great and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.* Eternity

\* John 16. 28.

\* John 17. 5.

\* Prov. 8. 22.

\* Micah 5. 2.

\* Petrus.

\* Acts 15. 18.

\* Job. 26. 26.  
compared with  
the 23.



Eternity sets God above our Enquiries and Censures. Infants of a day old are not able to understand the acts of wise and gray Heads: Shall we, that are of so short a being and understanding as yesterday, presume to measure the motions of Eternity by our scanty Intellects? We that cannot foresee an unexpected accident which falls in to blast a well laid design, and run a Ship many Leagues back from the intended Harbour; We cannot understand the reason of things we see done in time, the motions of the Sea, the generation of Rain, the nature of Light, the Sympathies and Antipathies of the Creatures; and shall we dare to censure the actions of an eternal God so infinitely beyond our reach? The Counsels of a boundless Being are not to be scann'd by the Brain of a silly Worm, that hath breathed but a few minutes in the world: Since Eternity cannot be comprehended in time, 'tis not to be judged by a Creature of time, *Let us remember to magnify his works which we behold*, because he is eternal, which is the exhortation of *Elihu*, backt by this Doctrin of Gods Eternity; \* and not accuse any work of him who is the Ancient of days, or presume to direct him, of whose Eternity we come infinitely short: When ever therefore any unworthy notion of the Counsels and Works of God is suggested to us by *Satan*, or our own corrupt hearts; let us look backward to Gods eternal and our own short duration, and silence our selves with the same Question wherewith God put a stop to the reasoning of *Job*; \* *Where wast thou, when I laid the foundations of the Earth?* and reprove our selves for our curiosity; since we are of so short a standing, and were nothing when the eternal God laid the first Stone of the World.

4. *What a folly and boldness is there in Sin, since an eternal God is offended thereby?*

All Sin is aggravated by Gods Eternity: The blackness of the *Heathen* Idolatry was in changing the glory of the *incorruptible God*, \* erecting resemblances of him contrary to his immortal nature; as if the eternal God, whose life is as unlimited as Eternity, were like those Creatures whose beings are measured by the short Ell of Time, which are of a corruptible nature, and daily passing on to Corruption: They could not really deprive God of his Glory and Immortality, but they did in Estimation. There is in the nature of every sin a tendency to reduce God to a not Being. He that thinks unworthily of God, or acts unworthily towards him, doth (as much as in him lies) fully and destroy these two perfections of his, Immutability and Eternity: 'Tis a carriage, as if he were as contemptible as a Creature that were but of yesterday, and shall not remain in being to morrow. He that would put an end to Gods glory by darkning it, would put an end to Gods life by destroying it. He that should love a Beast with as great an affection as he loves a Man, contemns a rational nature; and he that loves a perishing thing with the same affection he should love an everlasting God, contemns his Eternity; He debaseth the duration of God below that of the World: The low valuation of God speaks him in his esteem, no better than withering Grass, or a Gourd, which lasts for a night; and the Creature which possesses his affection, to be a Good that lasts for ever. How foolish then is every sin, that tends to destroy a Being that cannot destroy or desert himself; a Being, without whose Eternity the Sinner himself could not have had the capacity of a being to affront him? How base is that, which would not let the works of God remain in their established posture? How much more base in not enduring the fountain and glory of all Beings, that would not only put an end to the Beauty of the world, but the Eternity of God?

5. *How dreadful is it to lye under the stroke of an eternal God?* His Eternity is as great a terror to him that hates him, as it is a comfort to him that loves him; because he is the *living God*, an *everlasting King*, the Nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. \* Though God be least in their thoughts, and is made light of in the world; yet the thoughts of God Eternity, when he comes to judge the world, shall make the Slighters of him tremble: That the Judge and Punisher lives for ever, is the greatest grievance to a Soul in misery, and adds an unconceivable weight to it, above what the infiniteness of Gods executive Power could do without that duration: His Eternity makes the punishment more dreadful than his Power; his Power makes it sharp, but his Eternity renders it perpetual; ever to endure, is the sting at the end of every lash.

And how sad is it, to think that God lays his Eternity to pawn for the punishment



ment of obstinate Sinners, and engageth it by an Oath, *that he will whet his glittering Sword, that his hand shall take hold of Judgment, that he will render Vengeance to his Enemies, and a Reward to them that hate him*, a reward proportioned to the greatness of their offences, and the glory of an eternal God? \* *I lift up my hand to Heaven, and say, I live for ever*, i. e. as surely as I live for ever, I will whet my glittering Sword. As none can convey good with a perpetuity, so none can convey evil with such a lastingness as God. 'Tis a great loss to lose a Ship richly fraught in the bottom of the Sea, never to be cast upon the Shore; But how much greater is it, to lose eternally a Sovereign God, which we were capable of eternally enjoying, and undergo an evil as durable as that God we slighted, and were in a possibility of avoiding? The miseries of men after this Life are not eased, but sharpen'd by the Life and Eternity of God.

\* Deut. 32. 47.  
41.

The Second Use is of *Comfort*. What foundation of comfort can we have in any of Gods Attributes, were it not for his Infiniteness and Eternity; though he be *merciful, good, wise, faithful*? What support could there be, if they were perfections belonging to a corruptible God? What hopes of a Resurrection to Happiness can we have, or of the duration of it; if that God that promised it were not immortal to continue it, as well as powerful to effect it? His Power were not Almighty, if his duration were not Eternal.

1. *If God be eternal, his Covenant will be so*. 'Tis founded upon the *Eternity* of God; the Oath whereby he confirms it, is by his *Life*: Since there is none greater than himself, he swears by *himself*, \* or by his own Life, which he engageth together with his Eternity for the full performance; so that if he lives for ever, the Covenant shall not be disannull'd, 'tis an *immutable Counsel*: \* The immutability of his Counsel follows the immutability of his Nature. Immutability and Eternity go hand in hand together. The promise of eternal Life is as ancient as God himself in regard of the purpose of the promise, or in regard of the promise made to Christ for us. \* *Eternal life which God promised before the world began*. As it hath an *antecedence*, so it hath a *post-etermity*; Therefore the Gospel which is the new Covenant publisht, is term'd *the everlasting Gospel*; \* which can no more be altered and perish, than God can change and vanish into nothing: He can as little morally deny his truth, as he can naturally desert his life. The Covenant is there represented in a Green Colour, to note its perpetual Verdure: The *Rain-bow*, the Embleme of the Covenant, *about the Throne, was like to an Emerald*, a Stone of a green colour; \* whereas the natural Rain-bow hath many colours; this but one, to signify its Eternity.

\* Heb. 6. 13.

\* Heb. 6. 16. 17.

\* Tit. 1. 2.

\* Rev. 14. 6.

\* Rev. 4. 3.

2. *If God be eternal, he being our God in Covenant, is an eternal Good and Possession*. *This God is our God for ever and ever*; \* *He is a dwelling place in all Generations*. We shall traverse the world a while, and then arrive at the blessings Jacob wished for Joseph; \* *The blessings of the everlasting hills*. If an Estate of a thousand Pound *per Annum* render a mans life comfortable for a short term, how much more may the Soul be swallowed up with joy in the enjoyment of the Creator, whose years never fail, who lives for ever to be enjoyed, and can keep us in life for ever to enjoy him? Death indeed will seize upon us by Gods irreversible order, but the immortal Creator will make him disgorge his morsel, and land us in a glorious immortality; our Souls at their Dissolution, and our Bodies at the Resurrection, after which they shall remain for ever, and imploy the extent of that boundless Eternity in the fruition of the Sovereign and Eternal God: For 'tis impossible that the Believer, who is united to the immortal God that is from everlasting to everlasting, can ever perish; for being in conjunction with him who is an ever flowing Fountain of Life, he cannot suffer him to remain in the jaws of Death. While God is eternal, and always the same; 'tis not possible that those that partake of his *spiritual* life, should not also partake of his *eternal*. 'Tis from the consideration of the endlessness of the years of God that the Church comforts her self, that *her Children shall continue, and their Seed be established for ever*. \* And from the eternity of God, *Habacuc*, chap. 1. 12. concludes the eternity of Believers, *Art not thou from everlasting O Lord my God, my holy One? We shall not dye O Lord*. After they are retired from this world, they shall live for ever with God without any change by the multitude of those imaginable years and ages that shall run for ever. 'Tis that God that hath

\* Psal. 102. 27.  
28.



hath neither beginning nor end, that is our God ; who hath not only immortality<sup>1</sup> in himself, but immortality to give out to others. As he hath *abundance of Spirit* to quicken them\*, so he hath abundance of Immortality to continue them. 'Tis only in the consideration of this a man can with wisdom say, *Soul take thy ease, thou hast Goods laid up for many years* ; to say it of any other possession, is the greatest folly in the judgment of our Saviour. \* *Mortality shall be swallowed up of Immortality* : *Rivers of pleasure shall be for evermore*. Death is a word never spoken there by any, never heard by any in that possession of Eternity ; 'tis for ever put out as one of Christs conquered enemies. \* Mal. 2. 15. \* Luke 12. 19, 20.

The happiness depends upon the presence of God, with whom Believers shall be for ever present. Happiness cannot perish as long as God lives : He is the first and the last ; the first of all delights, nothing before him ; the last of all pleasures, nothing beyond him : A Paradise of delights in every Point without a flaming Sword.

2. *The enjoyment of God will be as fresh and glorious after many ages, as it was at first*. God is eternal, and Eternity knows no change ; there will then be the fullest possession without any decay in the Object enjoy'd. There can be nothing past, nothing future ; time neither adds to it nor detracts from it ; That infinite fulness of perfection which flourisheth in him now, will flourish eternally, without any discolouring of it in the least by those innumerable ages that shall run to Eternity, much less any despoiling him of them. *He is the same in his endless Duration*. \* As God is, \* Psal. 102. 27. so will the Eternity of him be, without succession, without division : The fulness of joy will be always present ; without past to be thought of with regret for being gone ; without future to be expected with tormenting desires. When we enjoy God, we enjoy him in his Eternity without any flux ; an entire possession of all together, without the passing away of pleasures that may be wished to return, or expectation of future joys which might be desired to hasten. Time is fluid, but Eternity is stable, and after many ages, the joys will be as savory and satisfying, as if they had been but that moment first tasted by our hungry appetites. When the glory of the Lord shall rise upon you, it shall be so far from ever setting, that after millions of years are expired, as numerous as the Sands on the Sea-shore, the Sun, in the light of whose Countenance you shall live, shall be as bright as at the first appearance : He will be so far from ceasing to flow, that he will flow as strong, as full as at the first communication of himself in glory to the Creature. God therefore as sitting upon his Throne of Grace, and acting according to his Covenant, is like a *Jasper-stone*, which is of a green colour, a colour always delightful ; \* Because God \* Rev. 4. 3. is always vigorous, and flourishing ; a pure act of life, sparkling new and fresh rays of life and light to the Creature, flourishing with a perpetual Spring, and contenting the most capacious desire ; forming your interest, pleasure and satisfaction, with an infinite variety, without any change or succession : He will have variety to encrease delights, and eternity to perpetuate them ; This will be the fruit of the enjoyment of an infinite, an eternal God : He is not a Cistern but a Fountain, where-in water is always living and never putrifies.

4. If God be eternal, *Here is a strong ground of comfort against all the distresses of the Church, and the threats of the Churches Enemies*. Gods abiding for ever, is the Plea Jeremy makes for his return to his forsaken Church. \* *Thou O Lord, remainest for ever, thy Throne from Generation to Generation*. The Church is weak ; created things are easily cut off ; What prop is there, but that God that lives for ever ? What though *Jerusalem* lost its Bulwarks, the Temple were defaced, the Land wasted ; yet the God of *Jerusalem* sits upon an eternal Throne, and from everlasting to everlasting there is no diminution of his Power. The Prophet intimates in this complaint, that it is not agreeable to Gods Eternity to forget his People, to whom he hath from Eternity bore good will. In the greatest confusions, the Churches eyes are to be fixed upon the Eternity of Gods Throne, where he sits as Governour of the world : No Creature can take any comfort in this perfection, but the Church ; other Creatures depend upon God, but the Church is united to him. \* Lament. 5. 19, 20.

The first discovery of the Name *I am*, which signifies the Divine Eternity as well as Immutability, was for the comfort of the *oppressed Israelites in Egypt*\* ; It was then published from the secret place of the Almighty, as the only strong Cordial to refresh them : It hath not yet, it shall not ever lose its vertue in any of the miseries that



have, or shall successively befall the Church. 'Tis a comfort as durable as the God whole name it is: He is still, *I am*, and the same to the Church, as he was then to his *Israel*. His spiritual *Israel* have a greater right to the glories of it, than the carnal *Israel* could have. No oppression can be greater than theirs; what was a comfort suited to that distress, hath the same suitability to every other oppression. It was not a temporary name, but a name for ever; his memorial to all Generations, \* and reacheth to the Church of the Gentiles, with whom he treats as the God of *Abraham*, ratifying that Covenant by the *Messiah*, which he made with *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful.

\* v. 15.

\* Psal. 92. 7, 8, 9.

\* Zach. 1. 5.

\* Job 17. 14.

The Churches enemies are not to be fear'd; they may spring as the grass, but soon after do wither by their own inward principles of decay, or are cut down by the hand of God. \* They may be instruments of the anger of God, but they shall be scatter'd as the workers of iniquity by the hand of the Lord, that is high for evermore, v. 8. and is engaged by his promise, to preserve a Church in the World. They may threaten, but their breath may vanish, as soon as their threatnings are pronounc'd: for they carry their breath in no surer a place than their own Nostrils, upon which the eternal God can put his hand, and sink them with all their rage. Do the Prophets and instructors of the Church, live for ever? \* No. Shall then the Adversaries and Disturbers of the Church live for ever? They shall vanish as a shadow, their being depends upon the eternal God of the faithful, and the everlasting Judge of the wicked. He that inhabits Eternity, is above them that inhabit Mortality, and must, whither they will or no, say to Corruption, thou art my Father, and to the Worm, thou art my Mother, and my Sister. \* When they will act with a confidence, as if they were living Gods, he will not be mated, but evidence himself to be a living God above them. Why then should mortal men be fear'd in their frowns, when an immortal God hath promised protection in his word, and lives for ever to perform it?

5. Hence follows another comfort; since God is eternal, he hath as much power, as will to be as good as his word. His promises are established upon his eternity, and this perfection is a main ground of trust; \* Trust in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. ביה יהוה צור עולם His name is doubled, that name, *Iah*, and *Jehovah*, which was always the strength of his people; and not a single one, but the strength or rock of Eternities; not a failing but an eternal truth and power; that as his strength is eternal, so our trust in him should imitate his Eternity in its perpetuity; and therefore in the despondency of his people, as if God had forgot his promises, and made no account of them, or his word, and were weary of doing good, he calls them to reflect on what they had heard of his Eternity, which is attended with immutability, who hath an infiniteness of power to perform his will, and an infiniteness of understanding to judge of the right seasons of it. \* His Wisdom, Will, Truth, have always been, and will to Eternity be the same. He wants not life, any more than love, for ever to help us; since his word is past, he will never fail us; since his life continues, he can never be out of a capacity to relieve us: and therefore when ever we foolishly charge him by our distrustful thoughts, we forget his love, which made the promise, and his eternal life, which can accomplish it. As his word is the bottom of our trust, and his truth is the assurance of his sincerity, so his Eternity is the assurance of his ability to perform. His word stands for ever. \* A man may be my friend this day, and be in another world to morrow; and though he be never so sincere in his word, yet death snaps his life asunder, and forbids the execution. But as God cannot die, so he cannot lie; because he is the Eternity of *Israel*. \* The strength of *Israel* will not lie, nor repent, נצח perpetuity or eternity of *Israel*. Eternity implies immutability; we could have no ground for our hopes, if we knew him not to be longer liv'd than our selves. The Psalmist beats off our hands from trust in men, because their breath goes forth, they return to their earth, and in that day their thoughts perish. \* And if the God of *Jacob* were like them, what happiness could we have in making him our help? As his Sovereignty in giving precepts had not been a strong ground of Obedience, without considering him as an eternal Law-giver, who could maintain his rights; So his kindness in making the promises, had not been a strong ground of confidence, without considering him as an Eternal promiser, whose thoughts, and whose life can never perish. \* And this may be one

\* Isa. 26. 4.

\* Isa. 40. 27, 28.

\* Isa. 40. 8.

\* 1 Sam. 15. 29.

\* Psal. 145. 3, 4.

\* Crellius de,  
Deo cap. 18.  
p. 44. 45.



one reason, why the Holy Ghost mentions so often the *post-eternity* of God, and so little his *ante-eternity*: because that is the strongest foundation of our faith, and hope, which respects chiefly, that which is future, and not that which is past; yet indeed no assurance of his after-Eternity can be had, if his ante-Eternity be not certain. If he had a beginning, he may have an end; And if he had a change in his nature, he might have in his Counsels; But since all the resolves of God are as himself is, eternal, and all the promises of God are the fruits of his Counsel, therefore they cannot be chang'd: If he should change them for the better, he would not have been eternally Wise, to know what was best; If for the worse, he had not been eternally good or just. Men may break their promises, because they are made without foresight; but God that inhabits Eternity, foreknows all things, that shall be done under the Sun, as if they had been then acting before him; and nothing can intervene, or work a change in his resolves; because the least circumstances were eternally foreseen by him. Though there may be variations, and changes to our sight, the wind may rack about, and every hour new, and cross accidents happen; yet the eternal God, who is eternally true to his word, Sits at the Helm, and the Winds and the Waves obey him. And though he should defer his promise a *thousand years*, yet he is *not slack*: For he defers it but a day to his eternity; \* And who would not with comfort stay a day in expectation of a considerable advantage? \* 2 Pet. 3.8,9.

3. Use is for *Exhortation*.

1. To something which concerns us in our selves.

2. To something which concerns us with respect to God.

1. To something which concerns us in our selves.

1. Let us be deeply affected with our sins long since committed. Though they are past with us, they are in regard of Gods eternity present with him; there is no succession in Eternity, as there is in time: All things are before God at once; our sins are before him, as if committed this moment, though committed long ago. As he is what he is in regard of duration, so he knows what he knows in regard of knowledge. As he is not more than he was, nor shall not be any more than he is, so he always knew what he knows, and shall not cease to know, what he now know's. As himself, so his knowledge is one indivisible point of eternity. He knows nothing, but what he did know from eternity; he shall know no more for the future, than he now knows. Our sins being present with him in his eternity, should be present with us in our regard of remembrance of them, and sorrow for them. What though many years are laps'd, much time run out, and our iniquities almost blotted out of our memory? yet since a thousand years are in Gods sight, and in regard of his eternity but as a day; \* A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch in the night; They are before him. For suppose a man were as old as the World, above five thousand six hundred years; the sins committed five thousand years ago, are according to that rule, but as if they were committed five daies ago; so that sixty two years, are but as an hour and a half, and the sins committed forty years since, are as if they were committed but this present hour. But if we will go further, and consider them but as a watch of the Night, about three hours (for the Night consisting of twelve hours, was divided into set Watches) then a thousand years are but as three hours in the sight of God; and then sins committed sixtie years ago, are but as if they were committed within this five minutes.

Let none of us set light by the iniquities committed many years ago, and imagine that length of time can wipe out their guilt; No, let us consider them in relation to Gods eternity, and excite an inward remorse, as if they had been but the birth of this moment.

2. Let the consideration of Gods Eternity abate our pride. This is the design of the Verses following the Text, The Eternity of God being so sufficient to make us understand our own nothingness, which ought to be one great end of man, especially as fall'n. The eternity of God should make us as much disesteem our selves, as the excellency of God made Job abhor himself. \* His excellency should humble us under a sense of our vanity, and his eternity under a sense of the shortness of our duration. If man compares himself with other Creatures, he may be too sensible of his greatness, but if he

\* Psal. 90.4

\* Job. 42. 5, 6.



he compares himself with God, he cannot but be sensible of his Infancy.

1. *In regard of our impotence, to comprehend this Eternity of God.* How little do we know? How little can we know of Gods Eternity? We cannot fully conceive it, much less express it; we have but a *brutish* understanding in all those things, as *Agur* said of himself. \*

\* Prov. 30. 7.

\* Charrontois.

vent Livr. 1.

chp. 5. p. 17.

&c.

\* What is Infinite and Eternal cannot be comprehended by finite and temporary Creatures; If it could, it would not be infinite and eternal: For to know a thing, is to know the Extent, and cause of it; 'Tis repugnant to Eternity to be known, because it hath no limits, no causes; the most soaring understanding cannot have a proportionable understanding of it. What disproportion is there between a drop of water, and the Sea in their greatness and motion? Yet by a drop, we may arrive to a knowledge of the nature of the Sea, which is a Mass of drops joyn'd together. But the longest duration of times cannot make us know, what Eternity is: Because there is no proportion between time and Eternity. The years of God are as numberless, as his *thoughts*, \* and our minds as far from reckoning the one, as the other. If our understandings are too gross, to comprehend the Majesty of his infinite works, they are much more too short to comprehend the infiniteness of his Eternity.

\* Psal. 40. 5.

2. *In regard of the vast disproportion of our duration to this duration of God.*

1. *We have more of nothing than being.* We were nothing from an unbegun Eternity, and we might have been nothing to an endless Eternity, had not God call'd us into being; and if he please, we may be nothing by as short an annihilating word, as we were something by a Creating word. As it is the prerogative of God, to be, *I am that I am*; so it is the property of a Creature, to be, *I am not what I am*; *I am not* by my self *what I am*, but by the Indulgence of another. I was nothing formerly, I may be nothing again, unless he that is, *I am*, make me to subsist what I now am. Nothing is as much the title of the Creature, as Being is the title of God. Nothing is so holy as God, because nothing hath being as God. \* *There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none besides thee.* Mans life is an Image, a dream, which are next to nothing; and if compar'd with God, worse than nothing; a nullity as well as a vanity: Because *with God only is the fountain of life*. \* The Creature is but a drop of life from him, dependent on him. A drop of water is a nothing, if compar'd with the vast conflux of waters, and numberless drops in the Ocean.

\* 1 Sam. 2. 2.

\* Psal. 36. 9.

How unworthy is it for dust and ashes kneaded together in time, to strut against the *Father of Eternity*? Much more unworthy for that which is nothing, worse than nothing, to quarrel with that which is only being, and equal himself with him, that Inhabits Eternity.

2. *What being we have, had a beginning.* After an unaccountable Eternity was run out, in the very dregs of time, a few years ago we were created, and made of the basest and vilest dross of the world, the slime and dust of the Earth; made of that, wherewith Birds build their nests; made of that, which Creeping things make their habitation, and beasts trample upon; How monstrous is pride in such a Creature, to aspire, as if he were the Father of Eternity, and as Eternal as God, and so his own Eternity?

3. *What being we have, is but of a short duration in regard of our life in this World.* Our life is in a constant change, and flux, we remain not the same an intire day; youth quickly succeeds Child-hood, and age as speedily treads upon the heels of youth; there is a continual defluxion of minutes, as there is of sands in a glass. He is as a Watch wound up at the beginning of his life, and from that time is running down, till he comes to the bottom; some part of our lives is cut off every day, every minute. Life is but a moment, what is past cannot be recalled; what is future cannot be ensured: If we enjoy this moment, we have lost that which is past, and shall presently lose this by the next that is to come.

\* Job. 25. 6.

\* Job. 14. 2.

\* James 4. 14.

\* Psal. 102. 3.

The short duration of men is set out in Scripture by such Creatures, as soon disappear. A *worm*, \* that can scarce out live a winter. Grass, that withers by the summer Sun. Life is a *flower* soon withering, \* a *vapour* soon vanishing, \* a *smoak* soon disappearing. \* The strongest man is but compacted dust, the fabrick must moulder, the highest Mountain falls and comes to nought. Time gives place to Eternity



ternity, we live now, and die to morrow. Not a Man since the world began, ever lived a day in Gods sight: For no man ever lived a *thousand years*. The longest day of any mans life never amounted to twenty four hours in the account of divine Eternity: A life of so many hundred years, with the addition *he dyed*, makes up the greatest part of the History of the *Patriarchs*. \* And since the life of man hath been curtaild, if any be in the world eighty years, he scarce properly lives sixty of them, since the fourth part of time is at least consumed in sleep. \* Gen. 5.

A greater difference there is between the duration of God, and that of a Creature, than between the life of one for a minute, and the life of one that should live as many years as the whole globe of Heaven and Earth, if changed into papers, could contain figures: And this life, tho but of a short duration according to the period God hath determined, is easily cut off; the treasure of life is deposited in a brittle vessel: A small stone hitting against *Nebuchadnezzars Statue*, will tumble it down into a poor and nasty grave: A Grape stone, the bone of a fish, a small fly in the throat, a moist damp are enough to destroy an Earthly Eternity, and reduce it to nothing.

What a Nothing then is our shortness, if compared with Gods Eternity? Our frailty, with Gods duration? How humble then should perishing Creatures be before an Eternal God, with whom *our days are as a hands breadth, and our age as nothing*? \* The Angels that have been of as long a duration as Heaven and Earth, tremble before him; the Heavens melt at his presence; and shall we that are but of yesterday, approach a Divine Eternity with unhumbl'd Souls, and offer the Calves of our lips with the pride of Devils, and stand upon our terms with him, without falling upon our faces, with a sense that we are but dust and ashes, and Creatures of time? How easily is it to reason out mans humility, but how hard is it to reason man into it? \* Psal. 39. 5.

3. *Let the consideration of Gods Eternity take off our love and confidence from the world, and the things thereof.* The Eternity of God reproaches a pursuit of the world, as preferring a momentary pleasure before an everlasting God; as tho a temporal world could be a better supply, than a God whose years never fail. Alas! what is this Earth, men are so greedy of, and will get, tho by blood and sweat? What is this whole Earth, if we had the entire possession of it, if compared with the vast Heavens, the seat of Angels and blessed Spirits? Tis but as an Atome to the greatest Mountain, or as a drop of dew to the immense Ocean. How foolish is it, to prefer a drop before the Sea, or an Atome before the world? The Earth is but a point to the Sun; the Sun with its whole Orb, but a little part of the Heavens, if compared with the whole Fabrick. If a man had the possession of all those, there could be no comparison between those that have had a beginning, and shall have an end, and God who is without either of them. Yet, how many are there, that make nothing of the divine Eternity, and imagine an Eternity of nothing?

1. *The world hath been but a of short standing.* Tis not yet *six thousand years* since the foundations of it were laid; and therefore it cannot have a boundless excellency, as that God, who hath been from everlasting, doth possess. If *Adam* had liv'd to this day, and been as absolute Lord of his posterity, as he was of the other Creatures, had it been a competent object to take up his heart; had he not been a mad man, to have prefer'd this little created pleasure before an everlasting uncreated God? A thing that had a dependent Beginning, before that which had an independent Eternity?

2. *The beauties of the world are transitory and perishing.* The whole world is nothing else but a fluid thing, the Fashion of it is a Pageantry, *passing away*; \* tho the glories of it might be conceived greater than they are, yet they are not consistent, but transient; There cannot be an entire enjoyment of them; because they grow up, and expire every moment, and slip away between our fingers, while we are using them. Have we not heard of Gods dispersing the greatest Empires like *Chaff before a whirlwind*, or as smoke out of a Chimny; \* which tho it appears as a compacted cloud, as if it would choak the Sun, is quickly scattered into several parts of the Air, and becomes invisible? Nettles have often been heirs to stately Palaces, as God threatens *Irael*. \* We cannot promise our selves over night any thing the next day. A Kingdom with the glory of a throne may be cut off in a morning; \* The new wine may be taken from the mouth, when the *Vintage* is ripe; the devour- \* 1 Cor. 7. 31. \* Hos. 13. 3. \* Hos. 9. 6. \* Hos. 10. 15.



\* Joel 1. 15. devouring locust may snatch away both the hopes of that, and the harvest : \* they are therefore things which are not, and Nothing cannot be a fit object for confidence or affection. \* Prov. 23. 5. *Wilt thou set thy eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings.* They are not properly beings ; because they are not stable, but flitting ; They are not ; because they may not be the next moment to us, what they are this ; they are but Cisterns, not Springs, and broken Cisterns, not found and stable ; no solidity in their substance, nor stability in their duration. What a foolish thing is it then, to prefer a transient felicity, a meer nullity before an eternal God ? What a senseless thing would it be in a man, to prefer the Map of a Kingdom, which the hand of a Child can tear in pieces, before the Kingdom shadowed by it ? How much more inexcusable is it to value things, that are so far from being Eternal, that they are not so much as duskie resemblances of an Eternity ? Were the things of the world more glorious than they are, yet they are but as a counterfeit Sun in a Cloud, which comes short of the true Sun in the heavens both in glory and duration ; and to esteem them before God, is unconceivably baser, than if a man should Value a parti-colour'd bubble in the Air, before a durable rock of Diamonds. The comforts of this world are as Candles, that will end in a Snuff ; whereas the felicity that flows from an eternal God, is like Sun, that shines more and more to a perfect day.

3. *They cannot therefore be fit for a soul, which was made to have an interest in Gods Eternity.* The soul being of a perpetual nature, was made for the fruition of an Eternal good ; without such a good it can never be perfect. *Perfection*, that noble thing, riseth not from any thing in this world, nor is a title due to a Soul while in this world ; 'tis then they are said to be *made perfect*, when they arrive at that entire conjunction with the eternal God in another life. \* Heb. 12. 23. \* The soul cannot be enobled by an acquaintance with these things, or establish'd by adependence on them, they cannot confer, what a rational nature should desire, or supply it with what it wants.

The soul hath a resemblance to God in a *post-Eternity* : Why should it be drawn aside by the blandishments of earthly things, to neglect its true establishment, and lacquey after the Body, which is but the shadow of the Soul, and was made to follow it, and serve it ? But while it busieth it self altogether in the concerns of a perishing body, and seeks satisfaction in things that glide away, it ~~becomes~~ rather a body than soul, descends below its nature, reproacheth that God, who hath imprinted upon it an image of his own Eternity, and loseth the comfort of the everlastingness of its Creator. How shall the whole world, if our lives were as durable as that, be an happy Eternity to us, who have Souls, that shall survive all the delights of it, which must fry in those flames, that shall fire the whole frame of nature at the general conflagration of the world ? \*

\* 2 Pet. 3. 10.

4. *Therefore let us provide for an happy interest in the Eternity of God.* Man is made for an eternal state. The Soul hath such a perfection in its nature, that it is fit for Eternity, and cannot display all its operations but in Eternity : To an Eternity it must go, and live as long as God himself lives. Things of a short duration are not proportion'd to a Soul made for an eternal continuance ; to see that it be a comfortable Eternity, is worth all our care. Man is a forecasting Creature, and considers not only the present, but the future too, in his provisions for his family ; and shall he disgrace his nature, in casting off all consideration of a future Eternity ? Get possession therefore of the eternal God : *A portion in this life* is the lot of those, who shall be for ever miserable. \* But God, an *everlasting portion*, is the lot of them that are design'd for happiness. \* *God is my portien for ever.*

\* Psal. 17. 14.

\* Psal. 73. 26.

\* 1 Cor. 7. 29.

*Time is short.* \* The whole time for which God design'd this building of the world is of a little compass ; 'tis a Stage erected for rational Creatures to act their parts upon for a few thousand years ; the greatest part of which time is run out ; and then shall time like a rivulet fall into the Sea of Eternity, from whence it sprung. As Time is but a slip of Eternity, so it will end in Eternity ; our advantages consist in the present instant ; what is past, never promised a return, and cannot be fetcht back by all our vows : What is future, we cannot promise our selves to enjoy ; we may be snatcht away before it comes. Every minute that passeth, speaks the fewer remaining, till the time of death. And as we are every hour further from our *beginning*, we are nearer our *end*. The Child born this day grows up, to grow nothing at last.

In



In all Ages, there is *but a step between us and Death*, as David said of himself. \* The little time that remains for the Devil till the day of Judgment, envenoms his wrath; he rageth, because *his time is short*. \* The little time that remains between this moment and our death, should quicken our diligence to inherit the endless and unchangeable Eternity of God. \* 1 Sam. 28. 3. \* Rev. 12. 12.

5. *Often meditate on the Eternity of God.* The Holiness, Power and Eternity of God, are the fundamental Articles of all Religion, upon which the whole body of it leans; His Holiness for conformity to him, his Power and Eternity for the support of Faith and Hope. The strong and incessant Cries of the four Beasts, representing that Christian Church, are, *holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*. \* Though his Power is intimated, yet the chiefest are his Holiness, *three times* exprest; and his Eternity which is repeated, *v. 9. who lives for ever and ever*. This ought to be the constant practice in the Church of the Gentiles, which this Book chiefly respects: The meditation of his converting Grace manifested to Paul, ravisht the Apostles heart, but not without the triumphant consideration of his Immortality and Eternity, which are the principal parts of the Doxology. \* *Now unto the King Eternal, immortal, invisible, only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever*. It could be no great transport to the Spirit, to consider him glorious without considering him immortal: The unconfinedness of his perfections in regard of time, presents the Soul with matter of the greatest complacency. The happiness of our Souls depends upon his other Attributes, but the perpetuity of it upon his Eternity. Is it a comfort to view his immense Wisdom; his overflowing Goodness; his tender Mercy; his unerring Truth? What comfort were there in any of those, if it were a Wisdom that could be baffled; a Goodness that could be damped; a Mercy that can expire, and a Truth that can perish with the Subject of it? Without Eternity, what were all his other Perfections, but as glorious, yet withering Flowers; a great, but a decaying Beauty? By a frequent meditation of Gods Eternity, we should become more sensible of our own vanity and the worlds triflingness: How nothing should our selves; How nothing would all other things appear in our eyes? How coldly should we desire them? How feebly should we place any trust in them? Should we not think our selves worthy of contempt to dote upon a perishing glory, to expect support from an Arm of Flesh, when there is an eternal Beauty to ravish us, an eternal Arm to protect us? Asaph, when he considered God *a Portion for ever*, thought nothing of the Glories of the Earth, or the Beauties of the created Heavens worth his appetite or complacency, but God. \* Besides, an elevated frame of heart at the consideration of Gods Eternity, would batter down the strong holds and engines of any temptation: A slight temptation will not know where to find and catch hold of a Soul high and hid in a meditation of it; and if it doth, there will not be wanting from hence preservatives to resist and conquer it. What transitory pleasures will not the thoughts of Gods Eternity stifle? When this work busieth a Soul, 'tis too great to suffer it to descend, to listen to a sleeveless errand from Hell or the World. The wanton allurements of the Flesh will be put off with indignation. The proffers of the world will be ridiculous when they are cast into the Ballance with the Eternity of God, which sticking in our thoughts, we shall not be so easy a Prey for the Fowlers Ginn. \* Revel. 4. 2. \* 1 Tim. 1. 17. 16, 17. \* Psal. 73. 25, 26.

Let us therefore often meditate upon this, but not in a bare speculation without engaging our affections, and making every notion of the *Divine Eternity* end a in suitable impression upon our hearts: This would be much like the Disciples gazing upon the Heavens at the ascension of their Master, while they forgot the practice of his Orders: \* We may else find something of the nature of God, and lose our selves, not only in Eternity but to Eternity. \* Acts 1. 11.

2. And hence the second part of the Exhortation is, *to something which concerns us with a respect to God*.

1. If God be eternal, *How worthy is he of our choicest affections, and strongest desires of communion with him?* Is not every thing to be valued according to the greatness of its Being? How then should we love him, who is not only lovely in his nature, but eternally lovely; having from everlasting all those perfections centred in himself, which appear in time? If every thing be lovely, by how much the more it partakes of



the nature of God who is the chief Good, how much more infinitely lovely is God, who is superior to all other goods, and eternally so? Not a God of a few minutes, months, years or millions of years; not of the dreggs of time or the top of time, but of Eternity; above time, unconceivably immense beyond time: The loving him infinitely, perpetually, is an act of homage due to him for his eternal excellency: We may give him the one, since our Souls are immortal, though we cannot the other, because they are finite: Since he encloseth in himself all the excellencies of Heaven and Earth for ever, he should have an affection, not only of time in this world, but of eternity in the future; and if we did not owe him a love for what we are by him, we owe him a love for what he is in himself; and more for what he is, than for what he is to us: He is more worthy of our affections because he is the *eternal God*, than because he is our Creator; because he is more excellent in his nature than in his transient actions: The beams of his goodness to us, are to direct our thoughts and affections to him; but his own eternal excellency, ought to be the ground and foundation of our affections to him. And truly, since nothing but God is eternal, nothing but God is worth the loving; and we do but a just right to our love, to pitch it upon that which can always possess us and be possessed by us; upon an Object that cannot deceive our affection, and put it out of countenance by a dissolution.

And if our happiness consists in being like to God, we should imitate him in loving him as he loves himself, and as long as he loves himself: God cannot do more to himself than love himself; he can make no addition to his Essence, nor diminution from it. What should we do less to an eternal Being, than to bestow affections upon him, like his own to himself; since we can find nothing so durable as himself, for which we should love it?

2. *He only is worthy of our best Service.* The *Ancient of days* is to be served before all that are younger than himself; Our best obedience is due to him as a God of unconfined excellency: Every thing that is excellent deserves a veneration suitable to its excellency. As God is infinite, he hath right to a boundless service; as he is eternal, he hath right to a perpetual service: As Service is a debt of Justice upon the account of the excellency of his nature, so a perpetual service is as much a debt of justice upon the account of his Eternity. If God be infinite and eternal, he merits an honour and comportment from his Creatures suited to the unlimited perfection of his Nature, and the duration of his Being. How worthy is the *Psalmist's* resolution? *I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live, I will sing praise to my God while I have any being:* \*Tis the use he makes of the *endless duration* of the Glory of God, and will extend to all other service as well as praise. To serve other things, or to serve our selves, is too vast a service upon that which is nothing. In devoting our selves to God, we serve him that is, that was, so as that he never began; Is to come, so as that he never shall end; By whom all things are what they are; who hath both eternal knowledge to remember our service, and eternal goodness to reward It.

\* *Psal.* 104. 33.



A  
DISCOURSE  
UPON THE  
IMMUTABILITY  
OF  
G O D.

Psalm 102. 26, 27.

*They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old as a Garment; as a Vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*

**T**HIS Psalm contains a Complaint of a People pressed with a great Calamity; some think of the Jewish Church in Babylon, others think the Psalmist doth here personate Mankind lying under a state of corruption, because he wishes for the coming of the Messiah, to accomplish that Redemption promised by God and needed by them. Indeed the title of the Psalm is a Prayer of the Afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and pours out his complaint before the Lord: Whether afflicted with the sense of corruption, or with the sense of oppression. And the Redemption by the Messiah, which the ancient Church looked upon as the fountain of their Deliverance from a sinful or a servile Bondage, is in this Psalm spoken of: A set time appointed for the discovery of his mercy to Sion, v. 13. An appearance in glory to build up Sion, v. 16. The loosing of the Prisoner by Redemption, and them that are appointed to Death, v. 20. The calling of the Gentiles, v. 22. And the latter part of the Psalm, wherein are the verses I have read, are applied to Christ, Heb. 1. Whatsoever the design of the Psalm might be, many things are intermingled that concern the Kingdom of the Messiah, and Redemption by Christ.

Some make three parts of the Psalm,

1. A Petition plainly delivered, v. 1. 2. Hear my Prayer O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee, &c.
2. The Petition strongly and argumentatively enforced and pleaded, v. 3. from the misery of the Petitioner in himself, and his reproach from his Enemies.
3. An acting of Faith in the expectation of an Answer in the general Redemption promised, v. 12, 13. But thou O Lord shalt endure for ever; thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Sion; The Heathen shall fear thy Name.

D d 2.

The



\* *Pa. ent.*

The *first part* is the Petition pleaded; the *second part* is the Petition answered in an assurance, that there should in time be a full deliverance. \* The design of the *Pen-man*, is to confirm the Church in the truth of the Divine Promises; that though the foundations of the World should be ript up, and the Heavens clatter together, and the whole Fabrick of them be unpinn'd and fall to pieces, the firmest parts of it dissolved; yet the Church should continue in its stability, because it stands not upon the changeableness of Creatures, but is built upon the immutable Rock of the truth God, which is as little subject to change as his Essence:

\* *verse 25.*

*They shall perish, thou shalt change them.* As he had before ascribed to God the foundation of Heaven and Earth\*, so he ascribes to God here the destruction of them: Both the beginning and end of the World are here ascertained. There is nothing indeed from the present appearance of things that can demonstrate the cessation of the world; The Heaven and Earth stand firm; the motions of the heavenly Bodies are the same, their beautie is not decayed: Individuals corrupt, but the Species and Kinds remain: The Successions of the Year observe their due order; but the Sin of Man renders the change of the present appearance of the world necessary, to accomplish the design of God for the glory of his Elect. The Heavens do not naturally perish, as some fancied an old age of the world, wherein it must necessarily decay as the Bodies of Animals do; or that the parts of the Heavens are broken off by their rubbing one against another in their motion, and falling to the Earth, are the Seeds of those things that grow among us.\*

\* *Plin. Hist. lib. 2. cap. 3.*

*The Earth and Heavens.* He names here the most stable parts of the world, and the most beautiful parts of the Creation; those that are free from corruptibility and change, to illustrate thereby the Immutability of God; that though the Heavens and Earth have a Prerogative of fixedness above other parts of the world, and the Creatures that reside below; the Heavens remain the same as they were created, and the Center of the Earth retains its fixedness, and are as beautiful and fresh in their age as they were in their youth many years ago, notwithstanding the change of the Elements; Fire and Water being often turned into Air, so that there may remain but little of that Air which was first created by reason of the continual transmutation; yet this firmness of the *Earth and Heavens*, is not to be regarded in comparison of the unmoveableness and fixedness of the Being of God: As their beauty comes short of the glory of his Being, so doth their firmness come short of his *stability*.

Some by Heavens and Earth, understand the Creatures which reside in the Earth, and those which are in the Air, which is called Heaven often in Scripture; but the ruin and fall of these being seen every day, had been no fit illustration of the unchangeableness of God.

*They shall perish, they shall be changed.*

1. They *may* perish, say some; they have it not from themselves that they do not perish, but from thee, who didst endue them with an incorruptible nature; They shall perish if thou speakest the word; Thou canst with as much ease destroy them as thou didst create them: But the *Psalmist* speaks not of their possibility, but the certainty of their perishing.

\* *Coccei. in loc.*

2. They *shall* perish in their qualities and motion, not in their substance, say others: They shall cease from that motion which is designed properly for the generation and corruption of things in the Earth; but in regard of their substance and beauty they shall remain: As when the strings or Wheels of a Clock or Watch are taken off, the material parts remain; though the motion of it, and the use for discovering the time of the day ceaseth. \* To perish, doth not signify alway a falling into nothing, an annihilation, by which both the matter and the form are destroyed; but a ceasing of the present appearance of them; a ceasing to be what they now are, as a man is said to perish when he dies, whereas the better part of man doth not cease to be: The figure of the Body moulders away, and the matter of it returns to Dust; but the Soul being immortal ceaseth not to act, when the Body by reason of the absence of the Soul is incapable of acting. So the Heavens shall perish; the appearance they now have shall vanish, and a more glorious and incorruptible frame be erected by the power and goodness of God. The dissolution of Heaven and Earth is meant by the word [*perish*]; the raising a new frame is signified by the word

[*changed*]



[*changed*]; as if the Spirit of God would prevent any wrong meaning of the word [*perish*] by alleviating the sense of that, by another which signifies only a mutation and change; as when we change a Habit and Garment; we quit the old to receive the new.

[*As a Garment, as a Vesture.*] Thou shalt change them\*, *ἐλξῆς* Thou shalt fold *\* Septuag.*  
them up. The Heavens are compared to a Curtain\*, and shall in due time be folded *\* Psal. 104. 2.*  
up as Clothes and Curtains are. As a Garment encompasseth the whole body, so do  
the Heavens encircle the Earth. \* Some say, as a Garment is folded up to be laid  
aside, that when there is need it may be taken again for use; so shalt thou fold up *\* Ezech. in Heb.*  
the Heavens like a Garment, that when they are repaired, thou mayest again stretch  
them out about the Earth; Thou shalt fold them up, so that what did appear shall not  
now appear. It may be illustrated by the metaphor of a Scrole or Book, which the  
Spirit of God useth, *Isa. 34. 4. Rev. 6. 14. The Heavens departed as a Scrole when it is rouled*  
*together.* When a Book is rouled up or shut, nothing can be read in it till it be ope-  
ned again; so the Face of the Heavens, wherein the Stars are as Letters declaring  
the Glory of God, shall be shut or rouled together, so that nothing shall appear,  
till by its renovation it be opened again: As a Garment it shall be changed, not to  
be used in the same fashion and for the same use again. It seems indeed to be for the  
worse; an old Garment is not changed but into raggs, to be put to other uses, and  
afterwards thrown upon the Dung-hill: But Similitudes are not to be pressed too  
far; and this will not agree with the new Heavens and new Earth, *physically* so, as  
well as *metaphorically* so. 'Tis not likely the Heavens will be put to a worse use than  
God designed them for in Creation: However a change as a Garment, speaks not a  
total corruption, but an alteration of qualities; as a Garment not to be used in  
the same fashion, as before. We may observe,

1. That *it is probable, the world shall not be annihilated but refin'd.* It shall lose its  
present form and fashion, but not its foundation: Indeed as God raised it from no-  
thing, so he can reduce it into nothing; yet it doth not appear that God will anni-  
hilate it, and utterly destroy both the matter and form of it; part shall be consu-  
med, and part purified, *2 Pet. 3. 12, 13. The Heavens shall be on fire and dissolved,*  
*nevertheless we according to his promise look for a new Heaven and a new Earth.* They shall  
be melted down as Gold by the Artificer, to be refined from its Dross, and wrought  
into a more beautiful fashion, that they may serve the design of God for those that  
shall reside therein; a new world wherein Righteousness shall dwell: The *Apostle*  
opposing it thereby, to the old world wherein wickedness did reside. The Heavens  
are to be purged, as the Vessels that held the Sin-offering were to be purified by the  
fire of the Sanctuary.

God indeed will take down this Scaffold which he hath built to publish his Glory.  
As every Individual hath a certain term of its duration; so an end is appointed for  
the universal nature of Heaven and Earth, *Isa. 51. 6. The Heavens shall vanish like*  
*Smoke,* which disappears. As Smoke is resolved and attenuated into Air, not annihila-  
ted; So shall the world assume a new face, and have a greater clearness and splen-  
dor: As the Bodies of Men dissolved into Dust, shall have more glorious qualities  
at their Resurrection: As a Vessel of Gold is melted down to remove the batterings  
in it, and receive a more comely Form by the Skill of the Workman.

(1.) *The world was not destroyed by the Deluge:* It was rather washed by  
water, than consumed; So it shall be rather refined by the last fire, than lie under an  
irrecoverable ruin.

(2.) 'Tis not likely God would liken the everlastingness of his Covenant, and the  
perpetuity of his spiritual Israel, to the duration of the ordinances of the Heavens, (as he doth  
in *Jer. 21. 35, 36.*) if they were wholly to depart from before him\*. Though that place may  
only tend to an assurance of a Church in the world while the world endures; yet it  
would be but small comfort, if the happiness of Believers should endure no longer  
than the Heavens and Earth, if they were to have a total period.

(3.) Besides, the Bodies of the Saints must have place for their support to move in, and  
glorious objects suited to those glorious senses which shall be restored to them; Not in any  
carnal way, which our Saviour rejects, when he saith there is no eating, or drinking,  
or marrying, &c. in the other world; but whereby they may glorify God; though  
how or in what manner their senses shall be used, would be rashness to determine;  
only



only something is necessary for the corporal state of men, that there may be an employment for their Senses as well as their Souls.

(4.) Again, *How could the Creature, the world or any part of it be said to be delivered from the bondage of Corruption into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God; if the whole Frame of Heaven and Earth were to be annihilated, Rom. 2. 21?* The Apostle saith also that the Creature waits with an earnest expectation for this manifestation of the Sons of God, v. 19. which would have no foundation, if the whole frame should be reduced to nothing. What joyful expectation can there be in any of a total ruin? How should the Creature be capable of partaking in this glorious liberty of the Sons of God?

\* As the World for the sin of man lost its first dignity, and was cursed after the fall, and the beauty bestowed upon it by creation defaced; So it shall recover that ancient glory, when he shall be fully restored by the Resurrection to that dignity he lost by his first sin. As Man shall be freed from his corruptibility to receive that glory which is prepared for him; so shall the Creatures be freed from that imperfection or corruptibility, those stains and spots upon the face of them, to receive a new glory suited to their nature and answerable to the design of God, when the glorious liberty of the Saints shall be accomplished. \* As when a Princes Nuptials are solemnized, the whole Country echoes with joy; So the inanimate Creatures, when the time of the Marriage of the Lamb is come, shall have a delight and pleasure from that renovation. The Apostle sets forth the whole world as a person groaning, and the Scripture is frequent in such Metaphors; as when the Creatures are said to wait upon God, and to be troubled\*; the Hills are said to leap, and the Mountains to rejoice: The Creature is said to groan, as the Heavens are said to declare the glory of God, passively, naturally, not rationally. 'Tis not likely Angels are here meant, though they cannot but desire it; since they are affected with the dishonour and reproach God hath in the world, they cannot but long for the restoration of his honour in the restoration of the Creature to its true end: And indeed the Angels are employed to serve man in this sinful state, and cannot but in holiness wish the Creature freed from his corruption: Nor is it meant of the new Creatures which have the first fruits of the Spirit, those he brings in afterwards, groaning and waiting for the Adoption\*; where he distinguisheth the rational Creature from the Creature he had spoken of before: If he had meant the believing Creature by that Creature that desired the liberty of the Sons of God; what need had there been of that additional distinction, and not only they, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within our selves? Whereby it seems he means some Creatures below rational Creatures, since neither Angels nor blessed Souls can be said to travail in pain, with that distress as a Woman in travail hath, as the word signifies, who perform the work joyfully which God sets them upon\*. If the Creatures be subject to vanity by the sin of man, they shall also partake of a happiness by the restoration of man. The Earth hath born Thorns and Thistles, and venomous Beasts; The Air hath had its Tempests and infectious Qualities; The Water hath caused its Floods and Deluges. The Creature hath been abused to luxury and intemperance, and been tyranniz'd over by Man, contrary to the end of its creation: 'Tis convenient that some time should be allotted for the Creature's attaining its true end, and that it may partake of the peace of Man, as it hath done of the fruits of his sin; otherwise it would seem that sin had prevailed more than grace, and would have had more power to deface than grace to restore and things into their due order.

5. Again, upon what account should the Psalmist exhort the Heavens to rejoice, and the Earth to be glad, when God comes to judge the world with Righteousness\*; if they should be annihilated and sunk for ever into nothing? It would seem, saith Duille, to be an impertinent figure, if the Judge of the world brought to them a total destruction; an entire ruin could not be matter of triumph to Creatures, who naturally have that instinct or inclination put into them by their Creator to preserve themselves, and to affect their own preservation.

6. Again, *The Lord is to rejoice in his works, Psal. 104. 31. The Glory of the Lord shall endure for ever; the Lord shall rejoice in his works;* not hath, but shall rejoice in his works: In the works of Creation; which the Psalmist had enumerated, and which is the whole scope of the Psalm: And he intimates that it is part of the glory of the Lord which endures for ever, that is, his manifestative glory, to rejoice in his works:

\* Rom. 2. 21.

\* Hys. in Heb. 1.

\* Messazat fur. Heb. 1.

\* Psal. 104. 27, 29.

\* Verse 23.

\* Messazat fur. Heb. 1.

\* Psal. 96. 11, 12, 13.



works : The Glory of the Lord must be understood with reference to the Creation he had spoken of before. How short was that joy God had in his works after he had sent them beautified out of his hand ? How soon did *he repent*, not only *that he had made Man*, but was *grieved at the heart* also, that he made the other Creatures which Man's sin had disordered ? What joy can God have in them, since the Curse upon the entrance of sin into the world remains upon them ? If they are to be annihilated upon the full restoration of his Holiness, what time will God have to rejoyce in the other works of Creation ? 'Tis the joy of God to see all his works in their due order ; everyone pointing to their true end ; marching together in their excellency, according to his first intendment in their Creation. Did God create the World to perform its end only for one day ; scarce so much, if *Adam* fell the very first day of his Creation ? What would have been their end, if *Adam* had been confirm'd in a state of happiness as the Angels were ; 'Tis likely will be answered and performed upon the compleat restoration of Man to that happy state from whence he fell. What Artificer compiles a work by his skill, but to rejoyce in it ? And shall God have no joy from the works of his hands. Since God can only rejoyce in goodness, the Creatures must have that goodness restored to them which God pronounced them to have at the first Creation, and which he ordained them for, before he can again rejoyce in his works : The goodness of the Creatures is the glory and joy of God.

*Inference 1.* We may infer from hence, *what a base and vile thing Sin is, which lays the foundation of the worlds change.* Sin brings it to a decrepit age : Sin overturned the whole work of God\* ; so that to render it useful to its proper end, there is a necessity of a kind of a new creating it : This causes God to fire the Earth for a purification of it from that infection and contagion brought upon it by the apostacy and corruption of Man : It hath served sinful man, and therefore must undergo a purging Flame to be fit to serve the holy and righteous Creator. As Sin is so riveted in the body of man, that there is need of a change by death to raise it out ; so hath the Curse for sin got so deep into the bowels of the world, that there is need of a change by fire to refine it for its Masters use. Let us look upon Sin with no other notion than as the Object of Gods hatred, the cause of his grief in the Creatures, and the Spring of the pain and ruin of the World.

*2. How foolish a thing is it to set our hearts upon that which shall perish, and be no more what it is now ?* The Heavens and Earth, the solidest and firmest parts of the Creation shall not continue in the posture they are ; they must perish and undergo a refining change : How feeble and weak are the other parts of the Creation, the little Creatures waiking upon and fluttering about the world, that are perishing and dying every day ; and we scarce see them clothed with life and beauty this day, but they wither and are despoil'd of all the next ; and are such frail things fit Objects for our everlasting Spirits and Affections ? Though the daily employment of the Heavens is the declaration of the glory of God\*, yet neither this, nor their harmony, order, beauty, amazing greatness and glory of them, shall preserve them from a dissolution and melting at the presence of the Lord : Though they have remained in the same posture from the Creation till this day, and are of so great antiquity ; yet they must bow down to a change before the Will and Word of their Creator ; and shall we rest upon that which shall vanish like Smoke ? Shall we take any Creature for our support like Ice, that will crack under our feet, and must by the order of their Lord Creator deceive our hopes ? Perishing things can be no support to the Soul ; If we would have rest, we must run to God and rest in God. How contemptible should that be to us, whose fashion shall pass away, which shall not endure long in its present form and appearance ; contemptible as a rest, not contemptible as the work of God ; contemptible as an end, not contemptible as a means to attain our end ? If these must be changed, how unworthy are other things to be the Center of our Souls, that change in our very using of them, and slide away in our very enjoyment of them ?

*Thou art the same.* The Essence of God with all the perfections of his nature are pronounced the same, without any variation from Eternity to Eternity : So that the Text doth not only assert the eternal duration of God, but his Immutability in that duration : his Eternity is signified in that expression *thou shalt endure* ; his Immutability



## A Discourse upon the

lity in this, *thou art the same*. \* To endure, argues indeed his Immutability as well as Eternity; For what endures, is not changed, and what is changed, doth not endure: But *thou art the same* \* doth more fully signifie it: He could not be the same if he could be changed into any other thing than what he is; The *Psalmist* therefore puts, not thou *hast been* or *shalt be*, but *thou art* the same without any alteration; thou art the same, that is, the same God, the same in Essence and Nature, the same in Will and Purpose: Thou dost change all other things as thou pleatest; but thou art immutable in every respect, and receivest no shadow of change, though never so light and small. \* The *Psalmist* here alludes to the name *Jehovah, I am*; and doth not only ascribe Immutability to God, but exclude every thing else from partaking in that perfection: All things else are tottering; God sees all other things in continual motion under his feet, like Water passing away and no more seen, while he remains fixed and immoveable: His Wisdom and Power, his Knowledge and Will are alway the same. His Essence can receive no alteration, neither by it self nor by any external Cause; whereas other things either naturally decline to destruction, pass from one term to another till they come to their period; or shall at the last day be wrapped up, after God hath compleated his Will in them and by them; as a man doth a Garment he intends to repair and transform to another use.

\* *Ἀλλοιόσιμος*  
*ἡ ἀμεταβολία*  
above all change  
Theodor.

So that in the Text God as immutable, is opposed to all Creatures as perishing and changeable.

Doct. *God is unchangeable in his Essence, Nature and Perfections*. Immutability and Eternity are linkt together; and indeed true Eternity is true Immutability, whence Eternity is defin'd the Possession of an immutable Life. Yet Immutability differs from Eternity in our conception: Immutability respects the Essence or Existence of a thing, Eternity respects the duration of a Being in that State; or rather, \* *Immutability is the State it self*, Eternity is the measure of that State. A thing is said to be changed, when it is otherwise now in regard of Nature, State, Will, or any Quality than it was before; when either something is added to it or taken from it; when it either loses or acquires: But now it is the essential property of God, not to have any accession to, or diminution of his Essence or Attributes, but to remain entirely the same: He wants nothing; He loses nothing, but doth uniformly exist by himself, without any new nature, new thoughts, new will, new purpose or new place.

\* *Gamaheus*.

\* *Amiraut* for  
Heb. 9. p. 153.

\* James 1. 17.

\* This unchangeableness of God was anciently represented by the figure of a *Cube*, a piece of Metal or Wood framed four-square; when every side is exactly of the same equality, cast it which way you will, it will always be in the same posture, because it is equal to it self in all its dimensions: He was therefore said to be the Center of all things, and other things the Circumference; the Center is never moved while the Circumference is; it remains immoveable in the midst of the Circle: *There is no variableness nor shadow of turning with him*. \* The *Moon* hath her Spots, so hath the *Sun*; there is a mixture of Light and Darkness; it hath its changes; sometimes it is in the increase, sometimes in the wane; it is always either gaining or losing, and by the turnings and motions, either of the Heavenly-bodies or of the Earth, 'tis in its Eclipse, by the interposition of the Earth between that and the Sun. The *Sun* also hath its diurnal and annual motion; it riseth and sets, and puts on a different Face: It doth not alway shine with a noon-day light; 'tis sometimes vail'd with Clouds and Vapours; it is always going from one Tropick to another, whereby it makes various shadows on the Earth, and produceth the various seasons of the year; 'tis not always in our Hemisphere, nor doth it always shine with an equal force and brightness in it: Such shadows and variations have no place in the eternal Father of Lights; He hath not the least spot or diminution of Brightness; nothing can cloud him or eclipse him. For the better understanding this Perfection of God,

*I shall Premise three things.*

1. *The Immutability of God is a Perfection*. Immutability considered in it self without relation to other things, is not a Perfection. 'Tis the greatest misery and imperfection of the evil Angels, that they are immutable in malice against God: But as God is infinite in Essence, infinitely good, wise, holy; so it is a Perfection necessary to his Nature, that he should be immutably all this; all excellency, goodness, wisdom, immutably all that he is; without this he would be an imperfect Being.

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Are not the Angels in Heaven, who are confirmed in a holy and happy state, more perfect than when they were in a possibility of committing evil and becoming miserable? Are not the Saints in Heaven, whose Wills by Grace do unalterably cleave to God and goodness, more perfect than if they were as *Adam* in Paradise, capable of losing their Felicity as well as preserving it? We count a Rock in regard of its stability, more excellent than the Dust of the Ground, or a Feather that is tossed about with every Wind; Is it not also the perfection of the Body to have a constant tenor of health, and the glory of a man not to warp aside from what is just and right, by the persuasions of any temptations?

2. *Immutability is a Glory belonging to all the Attributes of God.* 'Tis not a single perfection of the Divine Nature, nor is it limited to particular Objects thus and thus disposed. Mercy and Justice have their distinct objects, and distinct acts; Mercy is conversant about a Penitent, Justice conversant about an obstinate Sinner. In our notion and conception of the Divine Perfections, his Perfections are different; The Wisdom of God is not his Power, nor his Power his Holiness; but Immutability is the Center wherein they all unite: There is not one Perfection but may be said to be, and truly is immutable; none of them will appear so glorious without this Beam, this Sun of Immutability, which renders them highly excellent without the least shadow of imperfection: How cloudy would his Blessedness be, if it were changeable? How dim his Wisdom, if it might be obscur'd? How feeble his Power, if it were capable to be sickly and languish? How would Mercy lose much of its lustre, if it could change into wrath; and Justice much of its dread, if it could be turned into Mercy, while the object of Justice remains unfit for Mercy, and one that hath need of Mercy continues only fit for the Divine Fury? But unchangeableness is a Thread that runs through the whole Web; 'Tis the enamel of all the rest; none of them without it could look with a triumphant aspect: His Power is unchangeable; \* *In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength*; his Mercy and his Holiness endure for ever; He never could, nor ever can look upon iniquity\*: He is a Rock in the righteousness of his ways, the truth of his word, the holiness of his proceedings and the rectitude of his nature: All are exprest, *Deut. 32. 4. He is a Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are Judgment; A God of Truth and without Iniquity, just and right is he.* All that we consider in God is unchangeable; for his Essence and his Properties are the same, and therefore what is necessarily belonging to the Essence of God, belongs also to every perfection of the nature of God; none of them can receive any addition or diminution: From the unchangeableness of his nature, the Apostle, *James 1. 17.* infers the unchangeableness of his Holiness; and himself in *Mal. 3. 6.* the unchangeableness of his Counsel.

\* Isa. 26. 4.

\* Hab. 1. 12.

3. *Unchangeableness doth necessarily pertain to the Nature of God.* 'Tis of the same necessity with the rectitude of his Nature; He can no more be changeable in his Essence, than he can be unrighteous in his Actions. God is a necessary Being; He is necessarily what he is, and therefore is unchangeably what he is. Mutability belongs to contingency. If any perfection of his nature could be separated from him, he would cease to be God: What did not possess the whole Nature of God, could not have the Essence of God; 'Tis reciprocated with the Nature of God. Whatsoever is immutable by Nature, is God, whatsoever is God, is immutable by Nature. Some Creatures are immutable by his Grace and Power: \* God is holy, happy, wise, good by his Essence; Angels and Men are made holy, wise, happy, strong and good by Qualities and Graces: The Holiness, Happiness and Wisdom of Saints and Angels, as they had a beginning, so they are capable of increase and diminution, and of an end also; for their standing is not from themselves, or from the nature of created strength, holiness or wisdom, which in themselves are apt to fail and finally to decay; but from the stability and confirmation they have by the Gift and Grace of God: The Heaven and Earth shall be changed, and after that renewal and reparation, they shall not be changed. Our Bodies after the Resurrection shall not be changed, but for ever be made conformable to the glorious Body of Christ\*; but this is by the powerful Grace of God: So that indeed those things may be said afterwards rather to be unchanged than unchangeable, because they are not so by nature, but by sovereign dispensation. As Creatures have not necessary Beings, so they have not necessary Immutability. Necessity of being, and therefore Immutability of being

\* Archbol. Sermon.

\* Phil. 3. 21.



ing belongs by nature only to God; otherwise if there were any change in God, he would be sometimes what he was not, and would cease to be what he was; which is against the nature, and indeed against the natural notion of a Deity. Let us see then,

1. *In what regards God is immutable.*
2. *Prove that God is immutable.*
3. *That this is proper to God, and incommunicable to any Creature.*
4. *Some propositions to clear the unchangeableness of God from any thing that seems contrary to it.*
5. The Use.

First in what respects God is unchangeable.

1. *God is unchangeable in his Essence.* He is unalterably fixed in his Being, that not a Particle of it can be lost from it, not a Mite added to it. If a Man continue in being as long as *Methuselah*, Nine hundred and Sixty nine years; yet there is not a day, nay an hour, wherein there is not some alteration in his substance; though no substantial part is wanting, yet there is an addition to him by his Food, a diminution of something by his Labour; He is always making some acquisition, or suffering some loss: But in God there can be no alteration, by the accession of any thing to make his substance greater or better, or by diminution to make it less or worse. He who hath no being from another, cannot but be always what he is: God is the first Being, an independent Being; He was not produced of himself, or of any other, but by nature always hath been; and therefore cannot by himself, or by any other be changed from what he is in his own nature. That which is not, may as well assume to it self a Being, as he who hath and is all Being, have the least change from what he is. Again, because he is a Spirit, he is not subject to those mutations which are found in corporeal and bodily Natures; Because he is an absolutely simple Spirit, not having the least particle of composition; he is not capable of those changes which may be in created Spirits.

1. If his Essence were mutable. *God would not truly be;* It could not be truly said by himself, *I am that I am*,\* if he were such a Thing or Being at this time, and a different Being at another time. Whatsoever is changed, properly is not, because it doth not remain to be what it was: That which is changed was something, is something, and will be something; a Being remains to that thing which is changed; yet though it may be said such a thing is, yet it may be also said such a thing is not, because it is not what it was in its first being; 'tis not now what it was, 'tis now what it was not; 'tis another thing than it was, it was another thing than it is; it will be another thing than what it is or was: 'Tis indeed a Being, but a different Being from what it was before. But if God were changed, it could not be said of him that *he is*, but it might also be said of him that *he is not*; or if he were changeable or could be changed, it might be said of him he is, but he will not be what he is; or he may not be what he is, but there will be or may be some difference in his Being, and so God would not be *I am that I am*; for though he would not cease utterly to be, yet he would cease to be what he was before.

2. Again, If his Essence were mutable, *he could not be perfectly blessed, and fully rejoice in himself.* If he changed for the better, he could not have an infinite pleasure in what he was before the change, because he was not infinitely blessed; and the pleasure of that state could not be of a higher kind than the state it self, or at least the apprehension of a happiness in it: If he changed for the worse, he could not have a pleasure in it after the change; for according to the diminution of his state, would be the decrease of his pleasure: His pleasure could not be infinite before the change, if he changed for the better; it could not be infinite after the change, if he changed for the worse: If he changed for the better, he would not have had an infinite Goodness of being before; and not having an infinite Goodness of Being, he would have a finite Goodness of Being; for there is no *medium* between finite and infinite: Then though the change were for the better, yet being finite before, something would be still wanting to make him infinitely blessed; because being finite, he could not change to that which is infinite; for finite and infinite are extremes so distant, that they can never pass into one another; that is, that that which is finite should become infinite, or that which is infinite should become finite: So that supposing him mutable, his Essence in no state of change, could furnish him with an infinite peace and blessedness.

3. Again,

\* Exod. 3. 14.



3. Again, If Gods Essence be changed, *he either increaseth or diminisheth*\*: Whatsoever is changed, doth either gain by receiving some thing larger and greater than it had in it self before, or gains nothing by being changed. If the former, then it receives more than it self, more than it had in it self before. The Divine Nature cannot be increased; for whatsoever receives any thing than what it had in it self before, must necessarily receive it from another, because nothing can give to it self that which it hath not: But God cannot receive from another what he hath not already, because whatsoever other things possess, is derived from him, and therefore contained in him, as the Fountain contains the Vertue in it self which it conveys to the Streams; so that God cannot gain any thing: If a thing that is changed gain nothing by that change, it loseth something of what it had before in it self; and this loss must be by it self or some other. God cannot receive any loss from any thing in himself; he cannot will his own diminution; that is repugnant to every Nature: He may as well will his own destruction as his own decrease; Every decrease is a partial destruction: But it is impossible for God to dye any kind of Death, to have any resemblance of death, for he is immortal, and *only hath Immortality*\*, therefore impossible to be diminished in any particle of his Essence; nor can he be diminished by any thing in his own Nature, because his infinite simplicity admits of nothing distinct from himself, or contrary to himself. All decreases come from something contrary to the nature of that thing which doth decrease: Whatsoever is made less than it self, was not truly *unum*, one and simple, because that which divides it self in separation was not the same in conjunction. Nor can he be diminished by any other without himself; because nothing is superior to God, nothing stronger than God which can oppress him: But whatsoever is changed, is weaker than that which changeth it, and sinks under a Power it cannot successfully resist; Weakness belongs not to the Deity. Nor *lastly*, can God change from a State wherein he is, to another State equal to the former, as men in some cases may do; for in passing from one state to another equal to it, something must be parted with which he had before, that some other thing may accrue to him as a recompense for that loss, to make him equal to what he was: This recompense then he had not before, though he had something equal to it: And in this case it could not be said by God *I am that I am*, but I am equal to what I was; for in this case there would be a diminution and increase which (as was shewed) can not be in God.

\* Hugo Viduor. in Petavio.

\* 1 Tim. 6. 16.

\* Viduor. in Petavio.

\* Austin. Fulgen in Petavio.

4. Again, *God is of himself, from no other*\*: Natures, which are made by God, may increase, because they began to be; they may decrease, because they were made of nothing, and so tend to nothing; the condition of their original leads them to defect, and the Power of their Creator brings them to increase. But God hath no original, he hath no defect, because he was not made of nothing; He hath no increase, because he had no beginning: He was before all things, and therefore depends upon no other thing which by its own change can bring any change upon him. \* That which is from it self cannot be changed, because it hath nothing before it, nothing more excellent than it self; But that which is from another as its first cause and chief good, may be changed by that which was its efficient cause and last end.

\* Petav. Tom. 1. p. 173.

2. God is immutable in regard of Knowledge. God hath known from all Eternity all that which he can know, so that nothing is hid from him; He knows not at present any more than he hath known from Eternity, and that which he knows now, he always knows; *All things are open and naked before him*, Heb. 4. 13. A man is said to be changed in regard of knowledge, when he knows that now which he did not know before, or knows that to be false now which he thought true before, or hath something for the Object of his Understanding now, which he had not before: But

1. *This would be repugnant to the Wisdom and Omniscience which belongs to the Notion of a Deity.* That cannot be God, that is not infinitely wise; that cannot be infinitely wise, that is either ignorant of, or mistaken in his apprehension of any one thing: If God be changed in knowledge, it must be for want of wisdom; all change of this nature in Creatures, implies this defect preceding or accompanying it: Such a thought of God, would have been unworthy of him that is *only wise*; that hath no Mate for Wisdom\*; none wise besides himself: If he knew that thing this day which he knew not before, he would not be an *only wise* Being; for a Being that did know every thing at once, might be conceived, and so a wiser Being be apprehended by the

\* 1 Tim. 1. 17.



mind of man. If God understood a thing at one time, which he did not at another, he would be changed from Ignorance to Knowledge; As if he could not do that this day which he could do to morrow, he would be changed from Impotence to Power: He could not be always Omniscient, because there might be yet something still to come which he yet knows not, though he may know all things that are past. What way soever you suppose a change, you must suppose a present or a past Ignorance; If he be changed in his knowledge for the perfection of his understanding, he was ignorant before; If his understanding be impaired by the change, he is ignorant after it.

2. *If God were changeable in his Knowledge, it would make him unfit to be an Object of Trust to any rational Creature.* His Revelations would want the due ground for entertainment, if his Understanding were changeable; for that might be revealed as truth now which might prove false hereafter, and that as false now which hereafter might prove true; and so God would be an unfit Object of Obedience in regard of his Precepts, and an unfit Object of confidence in regard of his Promises: For if he be changeable in Knowledge, he is defective in Knowledge, and might promise that now which he would know afterwards was unfit to be promised, and therefore unfit to be performed: It would make him an incompetent Object of dread, in regard of his threatenings; for he might threaten that now, which he might know hereafter were not fit or just to be inflicted. A changeable mind and understanding cannot make a due and right judgment of things to be done, and things to be avoided. No wise man would judge it reasonable to trust a weak and flitting person.

God must needs be unchangeable in his Knowledge: But, as the *Schoolmen* say, that as the Sun always shines, so God always knows; as the Sun never ceaseth to shine, so God never ceaseth to know: Nothing can be hid from the vast compass of his Understanding, no more than any thing can shelter it self without the Verge of his Power. This farther appears in that

1. *God knows by his own Essence.* He doth not know as we do, by habits, qualities, species, whereby we may be mistaken at one time and rectified at another: He hath not an Understanding distinct from his Essence as we have; but being the most simple Being, his Understanding is his Essence; and as from the infiniteness of his Essence we conclude the infiniteness of his Understanding, so from the unchangeableness of his Essence, we may justly conclude the unchangeableness of his Knowledge. Since therefore God is without all composition, and his Understanding is not distinct from his Essence; what he knows, he knows by his Essence; and there can then be no more mutability in his Knowledge, than there can be in his Essence; and if there were any in that, he could not be God, because he would have the property of a Creature: If his Understanding then be his Essence, his Knowledge is as necessary, as unchangeable as his Essence: As his Essence eminently contains all perfections in it self, so his Understanding comprehends all things past, present and future, in it self: If his Understanding and his Essence were not one and the same, he were not simple but compounded; if compounded, he would consist of parts; if he consisted of parts, he would not be an independent Being, and so would not be God.

2. *God knows all things by one intuitive act.* As there is no succession in his Being, so that he is one thing now and another thing hereafter; so there is no succession in his Knowledge: He knows things that are successive, before their existence and succession, by one single act of intuition; by one cast of his eye all things future are present to him in regard of his Eternity and Omnipresence: So that though there is a change and variation in the things known, yet his Knowledge of them and their several changes in nature, is invariable and unalterable. As imagine a Creature that could see with his eye at one glance the whole compass of the Heavens, by sending out beams from his eye without receiving any species from them, he would see the whole Heavens uniformly; this part now in the East, then in the West, without any change in his eye; for he sees every part and every motion together; and though that great Body varies and whirls about, and is in continual agitation; his eye remains stedfast, suffers no change, beholds all their motions at once and by one glance. \*God knows all things from Eternity, and therefore perpetually knows them; the reason is because the Divine Knowledge is infinite\*, and therefore

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\* *Snarez*, vol. 1. p. 137.  
\* *Psal.* 145. 5.  
*His understanding is infinite.*



comprehends all knowable Truths at once. An eternal Knowledge comprehends in it self all Time, and beholds past and present in the same manner, and therefore his Knowledge is immutable: By one simple Knowledge he considers the infinite spaces of past and future.

3. *Gods knowledge and Will is the cause of all things and their successions.* \* There can be no pretence of any changeableness of knowledge in God, but in this case, before things come to pass, he knows that they will come to pass; after they are come to pass, he knows that they are past and slide away. This would be something if the succession of things were the cause of the divine Knowledge, as it is of our knowledge; but on the contrary, the divine Knowledge and Will is the cause of the succession of them: God doth not know Creatures because they are, but they are because he knows them. *All his works were known to him from the beginning of the world.* \* All his works were not known to him, if the events of all those works were not also known to him; If they were not known to him how should he make them? he could not do any thing ignorantly: He made them then after he knew them, and did not know them after he made them: His Knowledge of them made a change in them, their existence made no change in his Knowledge: He knew them when they were to be Created, in the same manner that he knew them after they were Created; before they were brought into act, as well as after they were brought into act; before they were made, they were, and were not; they were in the Knowledge of God, when they were not in their own nature: God did not receive his knowledge from their existence, but his Knowledge and Will acted upon them to bring them into being.

4. *Therefore the distinction of past and future makes no change in the Knowledge of God.* When a thing is past, God hath no more distinct knowledge of it after it is past, than he had when it was to come; all things were all in their Circumstances of past, present and to come, seen by his Understanding, as they were determined by his Will. \* Besides, to know a day to be past or future, is only to know the state of that day in it self, and to know its relation, to that which follows and that which went before: This day wherein we are, if we consider it in the state wherein it was yesterday, it was to come, it was future; but if we consider it in that state wherein it will be to morrow, we understand it as past. This in man cannot be said to be a different knowledge of the thing it self, but only of the circumstance attending a thing, and the different relation of it. As I see the Sun this day, I know it was up yesterday, I know it will be up to morrow; my knowledge of the Sun is the same; if there be any change it is in the Sun not in my knowledge, only I apply my knowledge to such particular circumstances. How much more must the knowledge of those things in God be unchangeable, who knows all those states, conditions and circumstances most perfectly from Eternity, wherein there is no succession, no past or future, and therefore will know them for ever? He always beholds the same thing; he sees indeed succession in things, and he sees a thing to be past which before was future: As from Eternity he saw Adam as existing in such a time; In the first time he saw that he would be, in the following time he saw that he had been: But this he knew from Eternity, this he knew in the same manner; tho there was a variation in Adam, yet there was no variation in Gods knowledge of him in all his states; though Adam was not present to himself, yet in all his states he was present to Gods Eternity.

5. *Consider, that the knowledge of God, in regard of the manner of it as well as the objects, is incomprehensible to a finite Creature.* So that tho we cannot arrive to a full understanding of the manner of Gods Knowledge, yet we must conceive so of it, as to remove all imperfection from him in it: And since it is an imperfection to be changeable, we must remove that from God; the Knowledge of God about things past, present, and future, must be unconceivably above ours: *His understanding is infinite,* Psal. 147. 5. There is no number of it; it can no more be calculated or drawn into an account by us, than infinite spaces which have no bounds and limits can be measured by us. We can no more arrive, even in Heaven, to a comprehensive understanding of the manner of his Knowledge, than of the infinite glory of his Essence; we may as well comprehend one as the other. This we must conclude, that God being not a Body, doth not see one thing with eyes and another thing with mind, as

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\* Austin. Bradwardine.

\* Acts 15. 18.

\* Gench 1. pa. Aquin. Qu. 9. cap. 1. Pa. 73.



## A Discourse upon the

we do; but being a Spirit, he sees and knows only with Mind, and his Mind is himself, and is as unchangeable as himself; and therefore as he is not now another thing than what he was, so he knows not any thing now in another manner than as he knew it from Eternity: He sees all things in the Glass of his own Essence; as therefore the Glass doth not vary, so neither doth his Vision.

3. *God is unchangeable in regard of his Will and Purpose.* A change in Purpose is, when a man determines to do that now which before he determined not to do, or to do the contrary; when a man hates that thing which he loved, or begins to love that which he before hated: When the Will is changed, a man begins to will that which he willed not before, and ceaseth to will that which he willed before: But whatsoever God hath decreed, is immutable; whatsoever God hath promised, shall be accomplished; *The Word that goes forth of his Mouth shall not return to him void, but it shall accomplish that which he pleaseth*\*; whatsoever he purposeth, he will do\*: His Decrees are therefore called *Mountains of Brass*\*; Brass, as having substance and solidity; Mountains, as being immoveable, not only by any Creature but by himself, because they stand upon the Basis of infallible Wisdom, and are supported by uncontrollable Power. From this Immutability of his Will published to Man, there could be no release from the severity of the Law, without satisfaction made by the death of a Mediator, since it was the unalterable Will of God that death should be the wages of Sin; and from this immutable Will it was, that the length of Time from the first promise of the Redeemer to his mission, and the daily provocations of men altered not his purpose for the accomplishment of it in the fullness of that time he had resolved upon; Nor did the wickedness of former Ages hinder the addition of several promises as Buttresses to the first.

To make this out, consider,

1. *The Will of God is the same with his Essence.* If God had a Will distinct from his Essence, he would not be the most simple Being. God hath not a faculty of Will distinct from himself: As his Understanding is nothing else but *Deus intelligens*, God understanding; so his Will is nothing else but *Deus volens*, God willing; being therefore the Essence of God, though it is considered according to our weakness as a faculty, 'tis as his Understanding and Wisdom, eternal and immutable, and can no more be changed than his Essence; The Immutability of the Divine Counsel depends upon that of his Essence: He is the Lord *Jehovah*, therefore he is true to his Word, *Mal. 3. 6. Isa. 43. 13. Yea, before the Day I am He, and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.* He is the same, immutable in his Essence, therefore irresistible in his Power.

2. *There is a concurrence of Gods Will and Understanding in every thing.* As his Knowledge is eternal, so is his Purpose. Things created had not been known to be, had not God resolved them to be the act of his Will; the existence of any thing supposeth an Act of his Will. Again, as God knows all things by one simple vision of his Understanding, so he wills all things by one act of volition; therefore the Purpose of God in the Scripture is not expressed by Counsels in the Plural Number, but Counsel, shewing that all the purposes of God are not various, but as one Will, branching it self out into many acts towards the Creature; but all knit in one Root, all links of one Chain. Whatsoever is eternal, is immutable: As his Knowledge is eternal, and therefore immutable, so is his Will; He wills or nills nothing to be in Time, but what he willed and nilled from Eternity; if he willed in Time that to be, that he willed not from Eternity, then he would know that in Time which he knew not from Eternity: For God knows nothing future, but as his Will orders it to be future and in time to be brought into being.

3. *There can be no Reason for any change in the Will of God.* When men change in their minds, it must be for want of foresight, because they could not foresee all the Rubbs and Barrs which might suddenly offer themselves; which if they had foreseen, they would not have taken such measures; hence men often will that which they afterwards wish they had not willed, when they come to understand it clearer, and see that to be injurious to them which they thought to be good for them; or else the change proceeds from a natural instability without any just cause, and an easiness to be drawn into that which is unrighteous; or else it proceeds from a want of power, when men take new Counsels, because they are invincibly hindered from executing the old. But none of those can be in God.

\* Isa. 55. 11.

Isa. 46. 11.

\* Numb. 23. 19.

\* Zach. 6. 1.



1. It cannot be *for want of foresight*. What can be wanting to an infinite Understanding? How can any unknown event defeat his Purpose; since nothing happens in the world but what he wills to effect, or wills to permit; and therefore all future events are present with him? Besides, it doth not consist with Gods Wisdom to resolve any thing, but upon the highest reason; and what is the highest and infinite reason, cannot but be unalterable in it self; for there can be no Reason and Wisdom higher than the highest. All Gods purposes are not bare acts of Will, but acts of Counsel, Eph. 1. 11. *He works all things according to the Counsel of his own Will*; and he doth not say so much that his Will, as that *his Counsel shall stand* Isa. 46. 10. It stands because it is Counsel: And the Immutability of a Promise is called the *Immutability of his Counsel*, Heb 6. 17. as being introduced and settled by the most perfect Wisdom, and therefore to be carried on to a full and compleat execution: His Purpose then cannot be changed for want of foresight; for this would be a charge of weakness.

2. Nor can it proceed *from a natural Instability of his Will*, or an easiness to be drawn to that which is unrighteous: If his Will should not adhere to his Counsel, 'tis because it is not fit to be followed, or because it will not follow it; If not fit to be followed, 'tis a reflection upon his Wisdom; if it be established and he will not follow it, there is a contrariety in God, as there is in a fallen Creature, Will against Wisdom: That cannot be in God, which he hates in a Creature, *viz.* the disorder of faculties, and being out of their due place. The *Righteousness* of God is like a great Mountain, Psal. 36. 6. The rectitude of his Nature is as immoveable in it self, as all the great Mountains in the World are by the strength of Man. *He is not as a Man, that he should repent or lye*, Numb. 23. 19. who often changes, out of a perversity of Will, as well as want of wisdom to foresee, or want of ability to perform. His eternal Purpose must either be righteous or unrighteous; if righteous and holy, he would become unholy by the change; if not righteous nor holy, then he was unrighteous before the change; which way soever it falls, it would reflect upon the Righteousness of God, which is a blasphemous imagination. \*If God did change his Purpose, it must be either for the better, then the Counsel of God was bad before; or for the worse, then he was not wise and good before.

\*Maxim. Tyrinus  
dissert. 3. 30.

3. Nor can it be *for want of strength*. Who hath power to controul him? Not all the combin'd devices and endeavours of men can make the Counsel of God to totter, Prov. 19. 21. *There are many devices in a mans heart, nevertheless the Counsel of the Lord, that shall stand*; that, and that only shall stand: Man hath a power to devise and imagin, but no power to effect and execute of himself. God wants no more Power to effect what he will, than he wants Understanding to know what is fit.

Well then, since God wanted not Wisdom to frame his Decrees, nor Holiness to regulate them, nor Power to effect them; what should make him change them? Since there can be no reason superior to His; no event unforeseen by him; no Holiness comparable to His; no Unrighteousness found in Him; no Power equal to His to put a rub in his way.

4. *Though the Will of God be immutable, yet it is not to be understood so, as that the things themselves so willed, are immutable*; Nor will the immutability of the things willed by him, follow upon the unchangeableness of his Will in willing them; though God be firm in willing them, yet he doth not will that they should alway be. God did not perpetually will the doing those things which he once decreed to be done: He decreed that Christ should suffer, but he did not decree that Christ should alway suffer; so he willed the Mosaical Rites for a time, but he did not will that they should alway continue; He willed that they should endure only for a time, and when the time came for their ceasing, God had been mutable if he had not put an end to them, because his Will had fixed such a Period: So that the changing of those things which he had once appointed to be practised, is so far from charging God with changeableness, that God would be mutable if he did not take them away, since he decreed as well their abolition at such a time, as their continuance till such a time; so that the removal of them was pursuant to his unchangeable Will and Decree. If God had decreed that such Laws should alway continue, and afterwards changed



\* Turretin, de  
satisfac. p. 256.

changed that Decree, and resolved the abrogation of them; then indeed God had been mutable; He had rescinded one Decree by another; He had then seen an error in his first resolve, and there must be some weakness in the reason and wisdom whereon it was grounded: \* But it was not so here; for the change of those Laws is so far from slurring God with any mutability, that the very change of them is no other than the Issue of his eternal Decree; for from Eternity he purposed in himself to change this or that dispensation, though he did decree to bring such a dispensation into the world: The Decree it self was eternal and immutable, but the thing decreed was temporary and mutable. As a Decree from Eternity doth not make the thing decreed to be eternal; so neither doth the immutability of the Decree, render the thing so decreed to be immutable: As for Example, God decreed from all Eternity to create the World; the Eternity of this Decree did not make the world to be in being and actually created from Eternity; so God decreed immutably that the world so created should continue for such a time; The Decree is immutable if the world perish at that time, and would not be immutable if the world did endure beyond that time that God hath fixed for the duration of it: As when a Prince orders a mans remaining in Prison for so many days; if he be prevailed with to give him a Delivery before those days, or to continue him in custody for the same Crime after those days, his Order is changed; But if he orders the delivery of him just at that time, till which he had before decreed that he should continue in Prison, the Purpose and Order of the Prince remains firm, and the change in the State of the Prisoner, is the fruit of that firm and fixed resolution: So that we must distinguish between the Person decreeing, the Decree it self, and the Thing decreed. The Person decreeing, *viz.* God is in himself immutable, and the Decree is immutable; but the Thing decreed may be mutable; and if it were not changed according to the first purpose, it would argue the Decree it self to be changed; For whiles a Man wills that this may be done now, and another thing done afterwards; the same Will remains, and though there be a change in the Effects, there is no change in the Will.

5. *The Immutability of Gods Will doth not infringe the Liberty of it.* The Liberty of Gods Will consists with the necessity of continuing his Purpose. God is necessarily good, immutably good; yet he is freely so, and would not be otherwise than what he is. God was free in his first Purpose; and purposing this or that by an infallible and unerring Wisdom, it would be a weakness to change the Purpose: But indeed the Liberty of Gods Will doth not seem so much to consist in an indifferency to this or that, as in an independency on any thing without himself: His Will was free, because it did not depend upon the Objects about which his Will was conversant. To be immutably good, is no point of Imperfection, but the height of Perfection.

4. As God is unchangeable in regard of Essence, Knowledge, Purpose; so he is *unchangeable in regard of Place.* He cannot be changed in *Time*, because he is *Eternity*; so he cannot be changed in *Place*, because he hath *Ubiquity*: He is eternal, therefore cannot be changed in time; He is omnipresent, therefore cannot be changed in Place: He doth not begin to be in one Place wherein he was not before, or cease to be in a Place wherein he was before. He that fills every place in Heaven and Earth, cannot change Place; He cannot leave one to possess another, that is equally in regard of his Essence in all; *He fills Heaven and Earth*, Jer. 23. 24. The Heavens that are not subject to those changes to which sublunary Bodies are subject, that are not diminished in quantity or quality; yet they are alway changing place in regard of their motion; no part of them doth alway continue in the same point: But God hath no change of his Nature, because he is most inward in every thing; He is substantially in all Spaces, real and imaginary; There is no part of the world which he doth not fill; no place can be imagined wherein he doth not exist. Suppose a Million of worlds above and about this, encircling one another; his Essence would be in every part and point of those Worlds; Because it is indivisible, it cannot be divided; nor can it be contained within those created limits of Millions of worlds, when the most soaring and best coyning fancy hath run through all Creatures, to the highest Sphear of the Heavens, and imagined one world after another, till it can fancy no more: None of these, nor all of these can contain God; for the *Heaven of Heavens*



*vens cannot contain him, 1 Kings 8. 27. He is higher than Heaven, deeper than Hell,\** and possitles infinite imaginary spaces beyond created limits. He who hath no cause of being, can have no limits of being : \* And though by Creation he began to be in the world ; yet he did not begin to be where the world is, but was in the same imaginary space from all Eternity ; for he was alway in himself by his own eternal *Ubi.*

Therefore observe, that when God is said to *draw near* to us, when we *draw near* to him\* ; 'tis not by local motion or change of place, but by special and spiritual influences, by exciting and supporting grace. As we ordinarily say, the Sun is come into the House when yet it remains in its place and order in the Heavens, because the Beams pierce through the Windows and enlighten the Room : So when God is said to *come down* or descend\* ; 'tis not by a change of place, but a change of outward acts, when he puts forth himself in ways of fresh Mercy or new Judgments, in the effluxes of his Love or the flames of his Wrath. When good men feel the warm Beams of his Grace refreshing them, or wicked men feel the hot Coals of his Anger scorching them. Gods drawing near to us, is not so much his coming to us, but his drawing us to him : \* As when Water-men pull a Rope that is in one end fastened to the Shore, and the other end to the Vessel ; the Shore is immoveable, yet it seems to the eye to come to them, but they really move to the Shore. God is an immoveable Rock ; we are floating and uncertain Creatures ; while he seems to approach to us, he doth really make us to approach to him : He comes not to us by any change of place himself, but draws us to him by a change of Mind, Will and Affections in us.

2. The second thing propounded, is the reasons to prove God immutable. The Heathens acknowledged God to be so ; Plato and the Pythagorians called God, or the Stable good Principle, *αὐτὸν, ἰδὸν* : The evil Principle, *ἕτερον*, another thing, changeable ; one thing one time, and another thing another time.

Daniel 6. 26. *He is the living God and steadfast for ever.*

1. The Name Jchovah signifies this Attribute, Exod. 3. 14. *I am that I am, I am hath sent me to you.* It signifies his Immutability as well as Eternity. *I am* signifies his Eternity ; *that* or *the same that I am*, his Immutability : As it respects the Essence of God, it signifies his unchangeable Being from Eternity to Eternity ; \* As it respects the Creature, it signifies his constancy in his Counsels and Promises, which spring from no other cause but the unchangeableness of his Nature. The reason why Men stand not to their Covenant, is because they are not always the same : *I am*, that is, I am the same, before the Creation of the World, and since the creation of the World ; before the entrance of Sin, and since the entrance of Sin ; before their going into Egypt, and while they remain in Egypt. \* The very Name *Jehovah*, bears according to the Grammatical Order, a mark of Gods Unchangeableness ; It never hath any thing added to it, nor any thing taken from it ; It hath no Plural Number, no Affixes, a Custom peculiar to the Eastern Languages ; It never changes its letters as other words do. \* That only is a true being, which hath not only an eternal Existence, but stability in it : That is not truly a Being that never remains in the same state. All things that are changed, cease to be what they were, and begin to be what they were not, and therefore cannot have the title truly applied to them *they are* ; they are indeed, but like a River in a continual Flux, that no man ever sees the same ; let his eye be fixed upon one place of it, the water he sees, slides away, and that which he saw not, succeeds in its place ; let him take his eye off but for the least moment, and fix it there again, and he sees not the same that he saw before. All sensible things are in a perpetual stream ; that which is sometimes this and sometimes that, is not, because it is not always the same ; whatsoever is changed, is something now which it was not alway : But of God it is said *I am*, which could not be if he were changeable ; for it may be said of him he is not, as well he is, because he is not what he was ; If we say not of him, he was, nor he will be, but only he is ; whence should any change arrive ? He must invincibly remain the same, of whose Nature, Perfections, Knowledge and Will, it cannot be said it was, as if it were not now in him ; or it shall be, as if it were not yet in him ; But he is, because he doth not only exist, but doth alway exist the same. *I am*, that is, I receive from no other what I am in my self : He depends upon no other in his Essence, Knowledge, Purposes, and therefore hath no changing Power over him.

\* Job. 11. 8.

\* Gamachous. ut supra

\* James 4. 8.

\* Gen. 11. 5. Exod. 34. 5.

\* The Ancients as Dionysius expressed it by this similitude.

\* Plato calls God *ἰσχυρὸν αἰὲν ἔχοντα* lib. 1. de Ec. \* *Stabilisq; manens dat cuncta moveri.* Boet. Consolat. lib. 3.

\* Trap. on Exod. \* Amyrald. de Trinitate p. 433.

\* Spanhe Syntax. part. 1. p. 37.

\* Petav. Theol. Dogmat. Tom. 1. cap 6. § 6. 7. 8.



2. *If God were changeable, He could not be the most perfect Being.* God is the most perfect Being, and possesses in himself infinite and essential Goodness, *Mat. 5. 48. Your heavenly Father is perfect*: If he could change from that Perfection, he were not the highest Exemplar and Copy for us to write after. If God doth change, it must be either to a greater Perfection than he had before, or to a less, *mutatio perfectiva vel amissiva*; If he changes to acquire a Perfection he had not, then he was not before the most excellent Being necessarily; He was not what he might be; there was a defect in him, and a privation of that which is better than what he had and was; and then he was not always the best, and so was not always God; and being not always God, could never be God; for to begin to be God is against the Notion of God: Not to a less perfection than he had; that were to change to imperfection, and to lose a perfection which he possessed before, and cease to be the best Being; for he would lose some good which he had, and acquire some evil which he was free from before: So that the sovereign Perfection of God, is an invincible Bar to any change in him; For which way soever you cast it for a change, his supreme Excellency is impaired and nulled by it: For in all change, there is something from which a thing is changed, and something to which it is changed; so that on the one part there is a loss of what it had, and on the other part there is an acquisition of what it had not: If to the better, he was not perfect, and so was not God; if to the worse, he will not be perfect, and so be no longer God after that change.

If God be changed, his change must be voluntary or necessary; if voluntary, he then intends the change for the better, and chose it to acquire a Perfection by it: The Will must be carried out to any thing under the notion of some Goodness in that which it desires. Since Good is the Object of the desire and will of the Creature, Evil cannot be the Object of the desire and will of the Creator. And if he should be changed for the worse when he did really intend the better, it would speak a defect of Wisdom, and a mistake of that for good which was evil and imperfect in itself; and if it be for the better, it must be a motion or change for something without himself; that which he desireth is not possessed by himself but by some other: There is then some good without him and above him, which is the end in this change; for nothing acts but for some end, and that end is within it self or without it self; If the end for which God changes be without himself then there is something better than himself: Beside, if he were voluntarily changed for the better, why did he not change before? If it were for want of Power, he had the imperfection of weakness; If for want of knowledge of what was the best Good, he had the imperfection of Wisdom, he was ignorant of his own Happiness; If he had both Wisdom to know it and Power to effect it, it must be for want of Will; He then wanted that love to himself and his own Glory, which is necessary in the supreme Being: Voluntarily he could not be changed for the worse, he could not be such an Enemy to his own Glory, there is nothing but would hinder its own Imperfection and becoming worse: Necessarily he could not be changed, for that necessity must arise from himself, and then the difficulties spoken of before will recur; or it must arise from another; He cannot be bettered by another, because nothing hath any good but what it hath received from the hands of his bounty, and that without loss to himself; nor made worse; if any thing made him worse, it would be Sin, but that cannot touch his Essence or obscure his Glory, but in the design and nature of the Sin it self, *Job. 35. 6, 7. If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? Or if thy Transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If thou be righteous what givest thou him; or what receives he at thy hand?* He hath no addition by the Service of Man, no more than the Sun hath of Light by a multitude of Torches kindled on the Earth; nor any more impair by the Sins of Men, than the Light of the Sun hath by mens shooting Arrows against it.

3. *\* God were not the most simple Being, if he were not immutable.* There is in every thing that is mutable, a Composition, either essential or accidental; and in all changes, something of the thing changed remains, and something of it ceaseth and is done away; as for example, in an accidental change, If a white Wall be made black, it loses its white Colour; but the Wall it self which was the Subject of that Colour, remains and loses nothing of its substance: Likewise in a substantial change, as when

Wood

\* Gamach.  
in prim.  
part. Aquin.  
quest. 5. cap. 1.  
part. 72.



Wood is burnt, the substantial part of Wood is lost, the earthy part is changed into Ashes, the airy part ascends in Smoke, the watery part is changed into Air by the Fire: There is not an annihilation of it, but a resolution of it into those parts whereof it was compounded; and this change doth evidence, that it was compounded of several parts distinct from one another. If there were any change in God, 'tis by separating something from him or adding something to him; if by separating something from him, then he was compounded of something distinct from himself; for if it were not distinct from himself, it could not be separated from him without loss of his Being; if by adding any thing to him, then it is a compounding of him, either substantially or accidentally.

Mutability is absolutely inconsistent with Simplicity, whether the change come from an internal or external Principle. If a change be wrought by something without, it supposeth either contrary or various parts in the thing so changed, whereof it doth consist; If it be wrought by any thing within, it supposeth that the thing so changed doth consist of one part that doth change it, and another part that is changed, and so it would not be a simple Being. If God could be changed by any thing within himself, all in God would not be God; his Essence would depend upon some parts, whereof some would be superior to others: If one part were able to change or destroy another, that which doth change would be God, that which is changed would not be God; so God would be made up of a Deity and a non-Deity, and part of God would depend upon God; part would be dependent, and part would be independent; part would be mutable part, immutable: So that Mutability is against the notion of Gods Independency as well as his Simplicity. \* God is the most simple Being; for that which is first in Nature, having nothing beyond it, cannot by any means be thought to be compounded; for whatsoever is so, depends upon the parts whereof it is compounded, and so is not the first Being: Now God being infinitely simple, hath nothing in himself which is not himself, and therefore cannot will any change in himself, he being his own Essence and Existence.

\* *Flavins Z. 2. char. mirylen in Pera. Tom. 1 p. 165.*

4. *God were not eternal if he were mutable.* In all change there is something that perishes, either substantially or accidentally. All change is a kind of death, or imitation of death; that which was, dies, and begins to be what it was not. The Soul of Man, though it ceaseth not to be and exist; yet when it ceaseth to be in quality what it was, is said to die. *Adam* died when he changed from Integrity to Corruption, though both his Soul and Body were in being\*; and the Soul of a regenerate Man is said to *die to Sin*, when it is changed from Sin to Grace\*. In all change there is a resemblance of death: So the Notion of Mutability is against the Eternity of God. If any thing be acquired by a change, then that which is acquired was not from Eternity, and so he was not wholly eternal; If any thing be lost which was from Eternity, he is not wholly everlasting: If he did decrease by the change, something in him which had no beginning would have an end; if he did increase by that change, something in him would have a beginning that might have no end. \* What is changed doth not remain, and what doth not remain is not eternal. Though God always remains in regard of Existence, he would be immortal and live away; yet if he should suffer any change, he could not properly be eternal, because he would not always be the same, and would not in every part be eternal; For all change is finished in Time, one moment preceding, another moment following; but that which is before Time cannot be changed by Time. God cannot be eternally what he was, that is, he cannot have a true Eternity, if he had a new Knowledge, a new Purpose, a new Essence; if he were sometimes this and sometimes that, sometimes know this and sometimes know that, sometimes purpose this and afterwards hath a new purpose; he would be partly temporary and partly eternal, not truly and universally eternal: He that hath any thing of newness, hath not properly and truly an intire Eternity. Again, by the same reason that God could in the least cease to be what he was, he might also cease wholly to be; and no reason can be rendred, why God might not cease wholly to be, as well as cease to be intirely and uniformly what he was: All changeableness implies a corruptibility.

\* Gen. 2. 17  
\* Rom. 6. 1

\* *Austin in Pet. Tom. 1. p. 11.*

5. *If God were changeable, He were not Infinite and Almighty.* All change ends



\* *Ex lib. 125. 3.*  
 תפוח  
 in ed. 125. 3.

in addition or diminution; if any thing be added, he was not infinite before; if any thing be diminisht, he is not infinite after. All change implies bounds and limits to that which is changed; but God is infinite, *His Greatness is unsearchable*\*. We can add Number to Number without any end, and can conceive an infinite Number; Yet the Greatness of God is beyond all our Conceptions: But if there could be any change in his Greatness for the better, it would not be unsearchable before that change; if for the worse, it would not be unsearchable after that change: Whatsoever hath limits and is changeable, is conceivable and searchable; But God is not only not known, but impossible in his own Nature to be known and searched out, and therefore impossible to have any diminution in his Nature. All that which is changed arriveth to something which it was not before, or ceaseth in part to be what it was before.

He would not also be *Almighty*. What is Omnipotent cannot be made worse; for to be made worse, is in part to be corrupted: If he be made better, he was not Almighty before, something of Power was wanting to him: If there should be any change, it must proceed from himself or from another; if from himself, it would be an inability to preserve himself in the perfection of his Nature; if from another, he would be inferior in Strength, Knowledge and Power to that which changes him, either in his Nature, Knowledge or Will; in both an inability; an inability in him to continue the same, or an inability in him to resist the Power of another.

6. *The World could not be ordered and governed, but by some Principle or Being which were immutable.* Principles are always more fixed and stable, than things which proceed from those Principles; and this is true both in Morals and Naturals. Principles in Conscience, whereby men are governed, remain firmly engraven in their Minds. The Root lies firmly in the Earth, while Branches are shaken with the Wind. The Heavens, the cause of Generation, are more firm and stable than those things which are wrought by their influence. All things in the world are moved by some Power and Vertue which is stable; and unless it were so, no Order would be observed in motion, no Motion could be regularly continued. He could not be a full satisfaction to the infinite desire of the Souls of his People. Nothing can truly satisfy the Soul of Man but Rest; and nothing can give it rest, but that which is perfect and immutably perfect; for else it would be subject to those agitations and variations, which the Being it depends upon is subject to.

\* *Ex lib. A.*  
*the metaph.*  
 p. 2. 2.  
 in ed. 125. 3.

The Principle of all things must be immutable\*; which is described by some by a Unity, the Principle of Number, wherein there is a resemblance of Gods Unchangeableness. A Unite is not variable, it continues in its own Nature immutably an Unite; It never varies from it self, it cannot be changed from it self, but is as it were so omnipotent towards others, that it changes all Numbers: If you add any Number, it is the beginning of that Number, but the Unite is not encreased by it; a new Number ariseth from that Addition, but the Unite still remains the same, and adds value to other Figures, but receives none from them.

3. *The third thing to speak to is,*

*That Immutability is proper to God, and incommunicable to any Creature.* Mutability is natural to every Creature as a Creature, and Immutability is the sole perfection of God: He only is infinite Wisdom, able to fore-know future Events; He only is infinitely powerful, able to call forth all means to effect; So that wanting neither Wisdom to contrive, nor Strength to execute, he cannot alter his Counsel: None being above him, nothing in him contrary to him, and being defective in no Blessedness and Perfection, he cannot vary in his Essence and Nature. Had not Immutability as well as Eternity been a Property solely pertaining to the Divine Nature, as well as creative Power and eternal Duration; the Apostles Argument to prove Christ to be God from this perpetual sameness, had come short of any convincing strength. These words of the Text he applies to Christ, *Heb. 1. 10, 11, 12. They shall be changed, but thou art the same.* There had been no strength in the reason; if Immutability by Nature did belong to any Creature.

*The changeableness of all Creatures is evident;*

1. *Of corporeal Creatures,* it is evident to sense. All Plants and Animals, as they have their duration bounded in certain limits; so while they do exist, they proceed



ced from their rise to their fall; they pass through many sensible alterations, from one degree of growth to another, from buds to blossoms, from blossoms to flowers and fruits; they come to their pitch that Nature hath set them, and return back to the state from whence they sprung; there is not a day but they make some acquisition, or suffer some loss; they dye and spring up every day; nothing in them more certain than their inconstancy: *The Creature is subject to vanity.*\* The heavenly Bodies are changing their place; the *Sun* every day is running his Race, and stays not in the same Point; and though they are not changed in their Essence, yet they are in their Place: Some indeed say there is a continual generation of Light in the Sun, as there is a loss of Light by the casting out its Beams, as in a Fountain there is a flowing out of the Streams, and a continual generation of supply: And though these heavenly Bodies have kept their standing and motion from the time of their Creation; yet both the Sun standing still in *Joshua's* time, and its going back in *Hazekiah's* time, shew that they are changeable at the pleasure of God.

\* Rom 8. 20

But in Man, the change is perpetually visible; every day there is a change from Ignorance to Knowledge, from one Will to another, from Passion to Passion, sometimes sad and sometimes cheerful, sometimes craving this and presently nauseating it; his Body changes from health to sickness, or from weakness to strength; some alteration there is either in Body or Mind. Man who is the noblest Creature, the subordinate end of the Creation of other things, cannot assure himself of a consistency and fixedness in any thing the short space of *a day*, no not of a minute; all his Months are *Months of vanity*\*; whence the *Psalmist* calls Man at the *best estate*, *altogether vanity*, a meer heap of vanity: As he contains in his Nature the Nature of all Creatures, so he inherits in his Nature the Vanity of all Creatures: A little World, the Center of the World and of the Vanity of the World; yea, *lighter than Vanity*\*; more moveable than a Feather; tost between Passion and Passion, daily changing his end, and changing the means; An Image of nothing.

\* Job 7. 2

\* Eccl. 35

\* Psal. 62. 2

2. *Spiritual Natures*, as *Angels*, They change not in their Being, but that is from the indulgence of God: They change not in their Goodness, but that is not from their Nature, but Divine Grace in their Confirmation; but they change in their Knowledge, they know more by *Christ* than they did by *Creation*\*; They have an addition of Knowledge every day, by the providential dispensations of God to his *Church*\*; and the increase of their Astonishment and Love, is according to the increase of their Knowledge and Insight: They cannot have a new discovery, without new admirations of what is discovered to them; There is a change in their joy, *when there is a change in a Sinner*\*: They were changed in their Essence, when they were made such glorious Spirits of nothing; Some of them were changed in their Will, when of holy they became impure: The good Angels were changed in their Understandings, when the Glories of God in *Christ* were presented to their view; and all can be changed in their Essence again; and as they were made of nothing, so by the Power of God may be reduced to nothing again. So glorified Souls shall have an unchanged operation about God, for they shall behold his Face without any grief or fear of loss, without vagrant thoughts; but they can never be unchangeable in their Nature, because they can never pass from finite to infinite.

\* 1 Tim. 3. 16

\* Eph. 3. 10

\* Luke 15. 22

No Creature can be *unchangeable in its Nature*.

1. *Because every Creature rose from nothing*. As they rose from nothing, so they tend to nothing, unless they are preserved by God: The Notion of a Creature speaks changeableness; because to be a Creature, is to be made something of nothing, and therefore Creation is a change of nothing into something: The Being of a Creature begins from change, and therefore the Essence of a Creature is subject to change: God only is uncreated, and therefore unchangeable: If he were made, he could not be immutable; for the very making is a change of not Being into Being. All Creatures were made good as they were the fruits of Gods Goodness and Power; but must needs be mutable, because they were the extracts of nothing.

2. *Because every Creature depends purely upon the Will of God*. They depend not upon themselves, but upon another for their Being: As they received their Being from the Word of his Mouth and the Arm of his Power, so by the same Word they



can be cancel'd into nothing, and return into as little significancy as when they were nothing: He that created them by a Word, can by a Word destroy them, *Psalms* 104. 29. If God should *take away their Breath, they dye and return into their Dust.* As it was in the power of the Creator that things might be, before they actually were; so it is in the power of the Creator that things after they are, may cease to be what they are; and they are in their own Nature as reducible to nothing, as they were producible by the power of God from nothing; for there needs no more than an Act of Gods Will to null them, as there needed only an Act of Gods Will to make them. Creatures are all subject to a higher Cause: They are all *reputed as nothing: He doth according to his Will in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can stay his Hand, or say unto him what dost thou?*\* But God is unchangeable, because he is the highest Good; none above him, all below him; all dependent on him, himself upon none.

\* *Dan.* 4. 35.

3. *No Creature is absolutely perfect.* No Creature can be so perfect or can ever be, but something by the infinite Power of God may be added to it; for whatsoever is finite may receive greater additions, and therefore a change. No Creature you can imagin, but in your thoughts you may fancy him capable of greater perfections than you know he hath, or than really he hath: The perfections of all Creatures are searachable; the perfection of God is only *unsearachable*\*, and therefore he only immutable.

\* *Job.* 11. 6.

God only is always the same: Time makes no addition to him, nor diminisheth any thing of him; His Nature and Essence, his Wisdom and Will have always been the same from Eternity, and shall be the same to Eternity without any variation.

4. The fourth thing propounded, is some Propositions to clear this Unchangeableness of God, from anything that seems contrary to it.

First, *There was no change in God when he began to create the World in Time.* The Creation was a real change, But the change was not subjectively in God, but in the Creature; the Creature began to be what it was not before. Creation is considered as active or passive\*; active Creation is the Will and Power of God to create; this is from Eternity, because God willed from Eternity to create in Time; This never had beginning, for God never began in time to understand any thing, to will any thing, or to be able to do any thing; but he alway understood, and alway willed those things which he determined from Eternity to produce in Time. The Decree of God may be taken for the Act decreeing, that is eternal and the same; or for the Object decreed, that is in Time: So that there may be a change in the Object, but not in the Will whereby the Object doth exist.

\* *Camach.* in  
part. 1. *Aquin.*  
*Qu. 9. cap. 1.*  
p. 72.

1. There was no change in God by the Act of Creation, because there was no new Will in him. There was no new Act of his Will which was not before. The Creation began in Time, but the Will of creating was from Eternity. The Work was new, but the Decree whence that new work sprung, was as ancient as the Ancient of days: When the time of creating came, God was not made *ex nolente volens*, as we are; for whatsoever God willed to be now done, he willed from Eternity to be done; but he willed also that it should not be done till such an instant of time, and that it should not exist before such a time. If God had willed the Creation of the World only at that time when the World was produced and not before, then indeed God had been changeable: But though God spake that word, which he had not spoke before, whereby the World was brought into act; yet he did not will that Will he willed not before. God did not create by a new Counsel or new Will, but by that which was from Eternity, *Eph.* 1. 9. All things are wrought according to that purpose in himself, and according to the Counsel of his Will, v. 11. and as the holiness of the Elect is the fruit of his eternal Will before the foundation of the World, v. 4. So likewise is the Existence of things, and of those persons whom he did elect: As when an Artificer frames a house or a Temple according to that Model he had in his mind some years before, there is no change in the Model in his mind, the Artificer is the same, though the work is produced by him sometime after he had framed that Copy of it in his own mind; but there is a change of the thing produced by him according to that Model. Or when a rich man intends four or five years hence if he lives, to build an Hospital, Is there any change in his Will, when after the ex-

pira-



piration of that time he builds and endows it? Though it be after his Will, yet it is the fruit of his precedent Will: So God from all Eternity did will and command that the Creatures should exist in such a part of time; and by this eternal Will, all things, whether past, present or to come, did, do and shall exist at that point of time which that Will did appoint for them; Not as though God had a new Will when things stood up in Being, but only that which was prepared in his immutable Counsel and Will from Eternity, doth then appear. There can be no Instant fixed from Eternity, wherein it can be said, God did not will the Creation of the World; For had the Will of God for the shortest Moment been undetermined to the Creation of the World, and afterwards resolved upon it, there had been a moral change in God from not willing to willing; But this there was not, for God executes nothing in Time which he had not ordained from Eternity, and appointed all the means and circumstances whereby it should be brought about. As the Determination of our Saviour to suffer was not a new Will, but an eternal Counsel, and wrought no change in God.

\* Acts 2. 23.

2. There is no change in God by the act of Creation, because *there was no new Power in God*. Had God had a Will at the time of the Creation which he had not before, there had been a moral change in him; so had there been in him a Power only to create then and not before, there had been a physical change in him from weakness to ability. There can be no more new Power in God, than there can be a new Will in God; for his Will is his Power, and what he willeth to effect, that he doth effect: As he was unchangeably Holy, so he was unchangeably Almighty, *which was, and is, and is to come*\*; which was Almighty, and is Almighty, and ever will be Almighty. The Work therefore makes no change in God, but there is a change in the thing wrought by that Power of God. Suppose you had a Seal engraven upon some Metal a Hundred years old, or as old as the Creation; and you should this day, so many Ages after the engraving of it, make an impression of that Seal upon Wax; would you say the Engraving upon the Seal were changed, because it produced that stamp upon the Wax now, which it did not before? No, the change is purely in the Wax, which receives a new figure or form by the impression; not in the Seal, that was capable of imprinting the same long before. God was the same from Eternity as he was when he made a Signature of himself upon the Creatures by Creation, and is no more changed by stamping them into several forms, than the Seal is changed by making impression upon the Wax: As when a house is enlightned by the Sun, or that which was cold is heated by it; there is a change in the house from darkness to light, from coldness to heat; but is there any change in the light and heat of the Sun? There is a change in the thing enlightned or warmed by that light and heat which remains fixed and constant in the Sun, which was as capable in it self to produce the same effects before, as at that instant when it works them: So when God is the Author of a new Work, he is not changed; because he works it by an eternal Will and an eternal Power.

\* Rev. 4. 2.

3. *Nor is there any new relation acquired by God by the Creation of the World*. There was a new relation acquired by the Creature; as when a Man sins, he hath another relation to God than he had before; he hath relation to God, as a Criminal to a Judge; But there is no change in God, but in the Malefactor. The Being of Men makes no more change in God than the Sins of Men. As a Tree is now on our right hand, and by our turning about it is on our left hand, sometimes before us sometime behind us, according to our motion neer it or about it, and the turning of the Body; There is no change in the Tree, which remains firm and fixed in the Earth; but the change is wholly in the posture of the Body, whereby the Tree may be said to be before us or behind us, or on the right hand or on the left hand. \* God gained no new relation of Lord or Creator by the Creation; for though he had created nothing to rule over, yet he had the Power to create and rule though he did not create and rule: As a Man may be called a skillful Writer, though he does not write, because he is able to do it when he pleases; or a Man skilful in Physick is called a Physician, though he doth not practice that Skill, or discover his Art in the distribution of Medicines; because he may do it when he pleases, it depends upon his own will to shew his Art when he has a mind to it: So the Name Creator and Lord, belongs to God from Eternity, because he could create and rule, though he did not create and rule: But howsoever, if there were any such change of relation, that  
God

\* Pet. Theol.  
Dogmat. Tom.  
1. lib.



God may be called Creator and Lord, after the Creation and not before; 'tis not a change in Essence, nor in Knowledge, nor in Will; God gains no perfection nor diminution by it, his Knowledge is not increased by it; He is no more by it than he was, and will be, if all those things ceased; and therefore *Austin* illustrates it by this similitude; as a piece of Money when it is given as the price of a thing, or deposited only as a pledge for the security of a thing borrowed; the Coin is the same and is not changed, though the relation it had as a pledge and as a price be different from one another: so that suppose any new relation be added, yet there is nothing happens to the Nature of God which may infer any change.

2. The second Proposition. *There was no change in the Divine Nature of the Son, when he assumed Human Nature.* There was an Union of the two Natures, but no change of the Deity in to the Humanity, or of the Humanity into the Deity; both preserved their peculiar Properties: The Humanity was changed by a Communication of excellent Gifts from the Divine Nature; not by being brought into an Equality with it, for that was impossible that a Creature should become equal to the Creator; He took the *Form of a Servant*, but he lost not the Form of God, he despoiled not himself of the Perfections of the Deity; He was indeed emptied, *and became of no reputation*\*, but he did not cease to be God, though he was reputed to be only a Man, and a very mean one too: The Glory of his Divinity was not extinguish'd nor diminish'd, though it was obscur'd and darkned under the vail of our infirmities; but there was no more change in the hiding of it, than there is in the Body of the Sun when it is shadowed by the interposition of a Cloud; His blood while it was pouring out from his Veins was the *blood of God*\*; and therefore when he was bowing the Head of his Humanity upon the Cross, he had the Nature and Perfections of God; for had he ceased to be God, he had been a meer Creature, and his sufferings would have been of as little value and satisfaction as the sufferings of a Creature.

\* Phil. 2. 7.

\* Acts 20. 28.

\* Zanch. de  
Immutab. Dei.  
\* Goulart de  
Immutab. de  
Dieu.

\* John 17. 5.

\* Gamach. in  
part. 1. Aquin.  
qu. 9. cap. 1.

\* Jer. 18. 10.  
\* Exod. 32. 14.  
John 3. 10.  
\* Gen. 6. 6.

He could not have been a sufficient Mediator, had he ceased to be God; and he had ceased to be God, had he lost any one Perfection proper to the Divine Nature; and losing none, he lost not this of unchangeableness, which is none of the meanest belonging to the Deity: Why by his Union with the Human Nature should he lose this, any more than he lost his Omniscience, which he discovered by his knowledge of the thoughts of Men; or his Mercy, which he manifested to the height in the time of his suffering? That is truly a change, when a thing ceaseth to be what it was before; This was not in Christ, He assumed our Nature without laying aside his own. \*When the Soul is united to the Body, doth it lose any of those perfections that are proper to its Nature? Is there any change either in the substance or qualities of it? No, but it makes a change in the Body, and of a dull Lump it makes it a living Mass, conveys vigor and strength to it; and by its power, quickens it to sense and motion; So did the Divine Nature and Human remain intire; there was no change of the one into the other, as Christ by a Miracle changed Water into Wine, or Men by Art change Sand or Althes into Glass: And when he prays for the Glory he had with God before the World was\*, he prays that a Glory he had in his Deity, might shine forth in his Person as Mediator, and be evidenced in that height and splendor suitable to his Dignity which had been so lately darkned by his abasement; that as he had appeared to be the Son of Man in the infirmity of the Flesh, he might appear to be the Son of God in the glory of his Person, that he might appear to be the Son of God and the Son of Man in one Person.

\* Again, there could be no change in this Union; for in a real change, something is acquired which was not possessed before, neither formally nor eminently; But the Divinity had from Eternity before the Incarnation, all the perfections of the Human Nature eminently in a nobler manner than they are in themselves, and therefore could not be changed by a real Union.

3. The third Proposition. *Repentance and other Affections ascribed to God in Scripture, argue no change in God.* We often read of Gods repenting, repenting of the Good he promised\*, and of the Evil he threatned\*, or of the Work he hath wrought.\* We must observe therefore that

1. Repentance is not properly in God. He is a pure Spirit, and is not capable of those



those Passions, which are signs of weakness and impotence, or subject to those regrets, we are subject to: Where there is a proper repentance, there is a want of foresight, an ignorance of what would succeed, or a defect in the examination of the occurrences, which might fall within consideration: All repentance of a fact, is grounded upon a mistake in the event which was not foreseen; or upon an after knowledge of the evil of the thing which was acted by the person repenting: But God is so wise that he cannot err, so holy he cannot do evil; and his certain prescience or foreknowledge, secures him against any unexpected events: God doth not act but upon clear and infallible reason: And a change upon passion is accounted by all so great a weakness in man, that none can entertain so unworthy a conceit of God. Where he is said to repent, \* he is also said to grieve; now no proper grief can be imagined to be in God: As repentance is inconsistent with infallible foresight, so is grief no less inconsistent with undefiled blessedness: *God is blessed for ever*, \* and therefore nothing can befall him that can stain that blessedness; his blessedness would be impaired, and interrupted, while he is repenting, tho he did soon rectify that which is the cause of his repentance: *God is of one mind and who can turn him? what his Soul desires that he doth.* \*

\* Gen. 6. 6.

\* Rom. 9. 8.

\* Job. 23. 13.

2. But *God accommodates himself in the Scripture to our weak capacity.* God hath no more of a proper repentance, than he hath of a real body; tho he in accommodation to our weakness ascribes to himself the members of our bodies to set out to our understanding the greatness of his perfections, we must not conclude him a body like us; so because he is said to have anger and repentance, we must not conclude him to have passions like us: When we cannot fully comprehend him as he is, he cloths himself with our nature in his expressions that we may apprehend him as we are able, and by an inspection into our selves, learn something of the nature of God; yet those human wayes of speaking ought to be understood in a manner agreeable to the infinite excellency and Majesty of God; and are only designed to mark out something in God which hath a resemblance with something in us: As we cannot speak to God as Gods, but as men; so we cannot understand him speaking to us as a God, unless he condescend to speak to us like a man. God therefore frames his language to our dulness, not to his own state; and informs us by our own phrases, what he would have us learn of his nature; as Nurses talk broken language to young Children. In all such expressions, therefore we must ascribe the perfection we conceive in them to God, and lay the imperfection at the door of the Creature.

3. Therefore *repentance in God is only a change of his outward conduct, according to his infallible foresight and immutable Will.* He changes the way of his Providential proceeding according to the carriage of the Creature, without changing his Will, which is the Rule of his Providence; when God speaks of his *repenting that he had made man*; \* tis only his changing his conduct from a way of kindness to a way of severity, and is a word suited to our capacities to signify his detestation of sin and his resolution to punish it, after man had made himself quite another thing, than God had made him; *It repents me*, that is; I am purposed to destroy the world; as he that repents of his work throws it away: \* As if a Potter cast away the vessel he had framed, it were a testimony, that he repented that ever he took pains about it: So the destruction of them seems to be a repentance in God that ever he made them; tis a change of events, not of Counsels. *Repentance* in us is a grief for a former fact, and a changing of our course in it: Grief is not in God, \* but his repentance is a willing a thing should not be as it was, which Will was fixed from Eternity; for God foreseeing Man would fall, and decreeing to permit it, he could not be said to repent in time of what he did not repent from Eternity; and therefore if there were no repentance in God from Eternity, there could be none in time. But God is said to repent, when he changes the disposition of affairs without himself; as men when they repent, alter the course of their actions, so God alters things *extra se* or without himself, but changes nothing of his own purpose within himself. It rather notes the action he is about to do, than any thing in his own nature, or any change in his eternal purpose. Gods repenting of his kindness is nothing but an inflicting of punishment, which the Creature by the change of his carriage hath merited: As his repenting of the evil threatned is the withholding the punishment

\* Gen. 6. 6.

\* Micah. 7. 16.

\* Petavius Theol. Dogmat.



denounced, when the Creature hath humbly submitted to his Authority and acknowledged his crime.

\* *Daille*, in Sermon on 2 Pct. 3. 9. pa. 60.

Or else we may understand those expressions of joy and grief and repentance to signifie thus much, \* that the things declared to be the objects of joy and grief and repentance are of that nature, that if God were capable of our passions, he would discover himself in such cases as we do: As when the *Prophets* mention the joys and applaudings of Heaven, Earth and the Sea, they only signifie that the things they speak of are so good, that if the Heavens, and the Sea had natures capable of joy, they would express it upon that occasion in such a manner as we do: So would God have joy at the obedience of men, and grief at the unworthy carriage of men, and repent of his kindness, when men abuse it, and repent of his punishment, when men reform under his rod, were the Majesty of his nature capable of such affections.

\* 2 Kings 20. 1. 5.  
Isa. 38. 1. 5.  
\* Jon. 3. 4, 10.

4. Proposition. *The not fulfilling of some predictions in Scripture, which seem to imply a changeableness of the Divine Will, do not argue any change in it.* As when he reprieved *Hezekiah* from death, after a message sent by the Prophet *Isaiah*, that he should die, \* and when he made an arrest of that Judgment he had threatened by *Jonah* against *Niniveh*. \*

There is not indeed the same reason of promises and threatnings altogether, for in promising the obligation lies upon God, and the right to demand, is in the party that performs the condition of the promise: But in threatnings, the obligation lies upon the sinner, and God's right to punish is declared thereby: So that tho God doth not punish, his Will is not changed; because his Will was to declare the demerit of sin, and his right to punish upon the Commission of it; tho he may not punish according to the strict letter of the threatening the person sinning, but relax his own law for the honour of his attributes, and transfer the punishment from the offender to a person substituted in his room; this was the case in the first threatening against man, and the substituting a surety in the place of the Malefactor.

\* *Rivet* in Genes. exerci. 51. pa. 213.

But the answer to these cases is this, \* that where we find predictions in Scripture declared, and yet not executed, we must consider them, not as absolute but conditional, or as the Civil Law calls it, an *interlocutory Sentence*. God declared what would follow by natural causes, or by the demerit of man, not what he would absolutely himself do: And in many of those predictions, tho the condition be not express'd, yet it is to be understood; so the promises of God are to be understood with the condition of perseverance in well doing; and threatnings with a clause of revocation annex'd to them, provided that men repent: And this God lays down as a general case, alway to be remembred as a rule for the interpreting his threatnings against a Nation, and the same reason will hold in threatnings against a particular person. Jer. 18. 7. 8, 9, 10. *At what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up and pull down and destroy it; If that Nation against whom I have pronounc'd, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them, and so when he speaks of planting a Nation, if they do evil, he will repent of the good, &c.* Tis a Universal rule by which all particular cases of this nature are to be tried; so that when mans repentance arrives, God remains firm in his first Will, always equal to himself, and it is not he that changes, but man. For since the interposition of the Mediator, with an eye to whom God governed the world after the fall, the right of punishing was taken off if men repented, and mercy was to flow out, if by a conversion men returned to their duty, Ezek. 18. 20, 21. This I say is grounded upon Gods entertaining the Mediator; for the Covenant of works discovered no such thing as repentance or pardon. Now these general rules are to be the interpreters of particular cases: So that predictions of good are not to be counted absolute, if men return to evil; nor predictions of evil, if men be thereby reduced to a repentance of their crimes.

So *Niniveh* shall be destroyed, that is, according to the general rule, unless the inhabitants repent, which they did; they manifested a belief of the threatening, and gave glory to God by giving credit to the Prophet: and they had a notion of this rule God lays down in the other Prophets; for they had an apprehension that upon their humbling themselves, they might escape the threatened vengeance, and stop



stop the shooting those Arrows that were ready in the Bow.\* Though *Jonah* proclaimed destruction, without declaring any hopes of an arrest of Judgment; yet their natural Notion of God afforded some natural hopes of relief, if they did their duty, and spurned not against the *Prophet's* message; and therefore saith one\* [God did not always express this condition, because it was needless; his own Rule revealed in Scripture was sufficient to some; and the natural Notion all men had of Gods Goodness upon their Repentance, made it not absolutely necessary to declare it: And besides saith he, it is bootless; The expressing it can do but little good; secure ones will repent never the sooner, but rather presume upon their hopes of Gods forbearance, and linger out their Repentance till it be too late: And to work men to Repentance, whom he hath purposed to spare, he threatens them with terrible Judgments; which by how much the more terrible and peremptory they are, are likely to be more effectual for that end God in his purpose designs them, viz. to humble them under a sense of their demerit, and an acknowledgment of his righteous Justice; and therefore though they be *absolutely* denounced, yet they are to be *conditionally* interpreted with a reservation of Repentance: As for that *Answer* which one gives, that by *forty days* was not meant *forty Natural days*, but *forty Prophetical days*, that is, years, a day for a year; and that the City was destroyed forty years after by the *Medes*: The expression of Gods repenting upon their Humiliation, puts a Bar to that Interpretation: God *repented*, that is, he did not bring the punishment upon them according to those days the *Prophet* had expressed; and therefore *forty natural days* are to be understood; and if it were meant of *forty years*, and they were destroyed at the end of that term, how could God be said to repent, since according to that, the punishment threatned was according to the time fixed brought upon them? And the destruction of it *forty years* after, will not be easily evinced, if *Jonah* lived in the time of *Jeroboam* the *second King* of *Israel*, as he did\*; And *Niniveh* was destroyed in the time of *Josiah* King of *Judah*. But the other *Answer* is plain. God did not fulfil what he had threatned, because they reformed what they had committed: When the threatening was made, they were a fit Object for Justice; but when they repented, they were a fit Object for a merciful Respite. To threaten when sins are high, is a part of Gods Justice; not to execute when sins are revok'd by Repentance, is a part of Gods Goodness. And in the Case of *Hezekiah*\*, *Isaiah* comes with a Message from God, that he should *set his house in order*, for he shall dye; that is, the Disease was mortal, and no outward Applications could in their own nature resist the Destemper. *Behold, I will add to thy days fifteen years; I will heal thee*: It seems to me to be one intire Message, because the latter part of it was so suddenly after the other committed to *Isaiah* to be delivered to *Hezekiah*; for he was not gon out of the Kings house, before he was ordered to return with the news of his health, by an extraordinary indulgence of God against the power of Nature and force of the Disease: *Behold I will add to thy Life*; noting it as an extraordinary thing: He was in the *second Court* of the Kings House when this word came to him\*; the Kings House having three Courts, so that he was not gon above half way out of the Palace. God might send this message of Death, to prevent the Pride *Hezekiah* might swell with for his deliverance from *Senacherib*: As *Paul* had a *Messenger of Satan* to buffet him to prevent his lifting up\*; and this good Man was subject to this sin, as we find afterwards in the Case of the *Babylonish* Embassadors: And God delayed this other part of the Message to humble him, and draw out his Prayer; and as soon as ever he found *Hezekiah* in this temper, he sent *Isaiah* with a comfortable message of recovery: So that the Will of God was to signify to him the mortality of his distemper, and afterwards to relieve him by a message of an extraordinary Recovery.

5. Proposition. *God is not changed, when of loving to any Creatures he becomes angry with them, or of angry he becomes appeased.* The change in these cases is in the Creature; according to the alteration in the Creature, it stands in a various relation to God: an *innocent* Creature is the Object of his Kindness, an *offending* Creature is the Object of his Anger; there is a change in the dispensations of God, as there is a change in the Creature making himself capable of such dispensations. God always acts according to the immutable nature of his Holiness, and can no more change in his Affections to good and evil, than he can in his Essence. When the

\* *Sanders's*  
Sermon par. 2.  
p. 157, 152.

\* 2 Kings 14:23

\* 2 Kings 20:1,  
5.  
\* Isa. 33: 1, 5.

\* 2 Kings 20:4

\* 2 Cor. 12: 7



Devils, now fallen, stood as glorious Angels, they were the Objects of Gods love, because holy : When they fell, they were the objects of Gods hatred, because impure ; the same reason which made him love them while they were pure, made him hate them, when they were criminal : The reason of his various dispensations to them was the same in both, as considered in God, his immutable holiness ; but as respecting the Creature, different ; the nature of the Creature was changed, but the Divine holy nature of God remain'd the same ; \* *With the pure thou wilt shew thy self pure, and with the froward thou wilt shew thy self froward* : He is a retreshing light to those that obey him, and a consuming fire to those that resist him. Tho the same Angels were not always loved ; yet the same reason that moved him to love them, moved him to hate them. It had argued a change in God, if he had loved them alway, in whatsoever posture they were towards him : It could not be counted love, but a weakness and impotent fondness ; the change is in the object not in the affection of God : For the object loved before, is not beloved now, because that which was the motive of love, is not now in it : So that the Creature having a different state from what it had, falls under a different affection or dispensation.

\* Psal. 18. 26.

It had been a mutable affection in God, to love that which was not worthy of love, with the same love wherewith he loved that which had the greatest resemblance to himself : Had God loved the fallen Angels in that state and for that state, he had hated himself, because he had loved that which was contrary to himself and the image of his own holiness, which made them appear before, good in his sight. The Will of God is unchangeably set to love righteousness and hate iniquity, and from this hatred to punish it : And if a righteous Creature contracts the wrath of God, or a sinful Creature hath the Communications of Gods love ; it must be by a change in themselves. Is the Sun changed when it hardens one thing and softens another, according to the disposition of the several subjects ? Or when the Sun makes a flower more fragrant, and a dead carcass more noysome ? There are divers effects, but the reason of that diversity is not in the Sun, but in the subject ; the Sun is the same, and produceth those different effects, by the same quality of heat : So if an unholy Soul approach to God ; God looks angrily upon him ; If a holy Soul come before him, the same immutable perfection in God draws out his kindness towards him : As some think, the Sun would rather refresh than scorch us, if our bodies were of the same nature and substance with that Luminary.

As the Will of God for Creating the world, was no new, but an Eternal Will, tho it manifested it self in time ; so the Will of God for the punishment of sin, or the reconciliation of the sinner, was no new Will : Tho his wrath in time break out in the effects of it upon sinners, and his love flows out in the effects of it upon penitents. Christ by his death reconciling God to man, did not alter the Will of God, but did what was consonant to his Eternal Will : He came not to change his Will, but to execute his Will. *Lo I come to do thy Will, oh God.* \* And the grace of God in Christ, was not a new grace, but an old grace in a new appearance ; *the grace of God hath appeared.* \*

\* Heb. 10. 7.

\* Tit. 1. 11.

6. Proposition, *A change of Laws by God argues no change in God, when God abrogates some Laws which he had settled in the Church and enacts others.* I spake of this something the last day : I shall only add this. God commanded one thing to the Jews, when the Church was in an *infant* state ; and removed those Laws, when the Church came to some *growth*. The *Elements* of the world were suited to the state of *Children*. \* A Mother feeds not the Infant with the same diet as she doth, when it is grown up. Our *Saviour* acquainted not his Disciples with some things at one time which he did at another, because they were not able to bear them ; Where was the change, in Christs Will, or in their growth from a state of weakness to that of strength ? A *Physitian* prescribes not the same thing to a person in health, as he doth to one conflicting with a distemper ; nor the same thing in the beginning, as he doth in the state or declination of the disease. The *Physicians* Will and Skill are the same, but the capacity and necessity of the Patient for this or that Medicine or method of proceeding, are not the same.

\* Gal. 4. 3.

VVhen God changed the *Ceremonial* Law, there was no change in the Divine Will



Will, but an execution of his Will; For when God commanded the observance of the Law, he intended not the perpetuity of it; nay, in the *Prophets* he declares the cessation of it; he decreed to command it, but he decreed to command it only for such a time; so that the abrogation of it was no less an execution of his Decree, than the establishment of it for a season was; The commanding of it was pursuant to his Decree for the appointing of it, and the nulling of it was pursuant to his Decree of continuing it only for such a season: So that in all this there was no change in the Will of God.

The Counsel of God stands sure; what changes soever there are in the World, are not in God or his Will, but in the events of things, and the different relations of things to God: 'Tis in the Creature, not in the Creator. The *Sun* always remains of the same hue, and is not discoloured in it self, because it shines green through a green Glass, and blew through a blew Glass; the different colours come from the Glass, not from the Sun: The change is alway in the disposition of the Creature, not in the Nature of God or his Will.

5. Use.

1. For Information.

1. If God be unchangeable in his Nature, and Immutability be a Property of God, Then *Christ* hath a Divine Nature. This in the *Psalms* is applyed to *Christ* in the *Hebrews*, Heb. 1. 11. where he joyns the citation out of this Psalm with that out of *Psalms* 45. 6, 7. *Thy Throne O God is for ever and ever; thou hast loved Righteousness and hated Iniquity, therefore God even thy God hath anointed thee with the Oyl of Gladness above thy Fellows; and thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the Foundation of the Earth, &c.* As the first must necessarily be meant of *Christ* the Mediator, and therein he his distinguish'd from God, as one anointed by him; so the other must be meant of *Christ*, whereby he is made one with God in regard of the Creation and Dissolution of the World, in regard of Eternity and Immutability. Both the Testimonies are linkt together by the Copulative [and] and thou Lord, declaring thereby that they are both to be understood of the same Person the Son of God: The design of the Chapter is to prove *Christ* to be God; and such things are spoken of him as could not belong to any Creature, no, not to the most excellent of the Angels: The same Person that is said to be anointed above his Fellows, and is said to lay the Foundation of the Earth and Heavens, is said to be the same, that is, the same in himself: The Prerogative of sameness belongs to that Person as well as Creation of Heaven and Earth.

The *Socinians* say it is spoken of God, and that God shall destroy the Heavens by *Christ*; If so, *Christ* is not a meer Creature, not created when he was incarnate; for the same Person that shall change the World, did create the World; If God shall change the world by him, God also created the world by him; He was then before the world was; for how could God create the world by one that was not? That was not in Being till after the Creation of the world? The Heavens shall be changed, but the Person who is to change the Heavens, is said to be the same, or unchangeable in the Creation as well as the Dissolution of the world. This sameness refers to the whole Sentence.

\* The *Psalms* wherein the *Text* is, and whence this in the *Hebrews* is cited, is properly meant of *Christ*, and Redemption by him, and the compleating of it at the last day, and not of the *Babylonish* captivity; That captivity was not so deplorable, as the state the *Psalmist* describes: *Daniel* and his Companions flourished in that Captivity; It could not reasonably be said of them, that their days were consumed like Smoke, their heart withered like Grass; that they forgot to eat their Bread\*: Besides, he complains of shortness of Life\*; But none had any more reason to complain of that in the time of the Captivity, than before and after it, than at any other time: Their Deliverance would contribute nothing to the natural length of their lives. Besides, when *Sion* should be built, the *Heathen* should fear the Name of the Lord, (that is, worship God) and all the Kings of the Earth his Glory. The rearing the second Temple after the deliverance, did not proselyte the Nations; nor did the Kings of the Earth worship the Glory of God; nor did God appear in such Glory at the erecting the second Temple: The second Temple was less glorious than the first, for it wanted some of the Ornaments which were the Glory of the first; But

\* *Placcus* de deitate *Christi*.

\* as it is V. 3. 4.  
\* V. 11.

\* V. 15.



- \* Ver. 15. But it is said of this state, \* that when the Lord should *build up Sion*, he should *appear in his Glory*; his proper Glory, and extraordinary Glory. Now *that God who shall appear in Glory and build up Sion*, is the *Son of God*, the Redeemer of the World; He builds up the Church, he causes the Nations to fear the Lord, and the Kings of the Earth his Glory; He broke down the partition Wall, and opened a Door for the entrance of the *Gentiles*; He struck the Chains from off the Prisoners, and loosed those that were appointed to death by the Curse of the Law\*: And to this Person is ascribed the Creation of the World; and he is pronounced to remain the same in the midst of an infinite number of changes in inferior things: And it is likely the *Psalmist* considers not only the beginning of Redemption, but the completing of it at the *second coming* of Christ; for he complains of those evils, which shall be removed by his second coming, *viz.* The shortness of life, persecutions and reproaches wherewith the Church is afflicted in this world; and comforts not himself with those attributes which are directly opposed to sin, as the mercy of God, the Covenant of God, but with those that are opposed to mortality and calamities; as the unchangeableness and Eternity of God; and from thence infers a perpetual establishment of believers. \* *The Children of thy Servants shall continue and their seed shall be established before thee*: So that the *Psalm* it self seems to aim in the whole discourse at Christ, and asserts his Divinity, which the *Apostle* as an interpreter doth fully evidence; applying it to him, and manifesting his Deity by his *immutability* as well as Eternity. \* While all other things lose their forms, and pass through multitudes of variations, he constantly remains the same, and shall be the same, when all the *Empires* of the world shall slide away, and a *Period* be put to the present motions of the Creation: And as there was no change made in his being by the Creation of things, so neither shall there be by the final alteration of things; he shall see them finish, as he saw them rise up into being, and be the same after their reign, as he was before their original; he is the first and the last. \*
- \* Ver. 20.
- \* Ver. 28.
- \* Daile Melang des Sermons Part 2. Sect. 1. p. 8. 9. 10, &c.
- \* Revel. 1. 17.

2. Here is ground and encouragement for Worship. An *Atheist* will make another use of this: If God be immutable, why should we worship him, why should we pray to him; Good will come if he wills it, evil cannot be averted by all our supplications, if he hath ordered it to fall upon us?

But certainly since unchangeableness in knowing, and willing goodness is a perfection, An adoration and admiration is due to God, upon the account of this excellence. If he be God he is to be revered, and the more highly reverenc'd, because he cannot but be God.

Again what comfort could it be to pray to a God, that like the *Chameleon* changed colours every day, every moment? What encouragement could there be to lift up our eyes to one that were of one mind this day and of another mind to morrow? Who would put up a Petition to an Earthly Prince that were so mutable, as to grant a Petition one day, and deny it another, and change his own act? But if a Prince promise this or that thing upon such or such a condition, and you know his promise to be as unchangeable as the Laws of the *Medes* and *Persians*, would any Man reason thus? because it is unchangeable we will not seek to him, we will not perform the condition, upon which the fruit of the Proclamation is to be enjoyed. Who would not count such an inference ridiculous? What blessings hath not God promised upon the condition of seeking him? Were he of an unrighteous nature, or changeable in his mind, this would be a bar to our seeking him, and frustrate our hopes: But since it is otherwise, is not this excellency of his nature the highest encouragement, to ask of him the blessings he hath promised, and a beam from Heaven to fire our zeal in asking? If you desire things against his Will, which he hath declared he will not grant; Prayer then would be an act of disobedience and injury to him, as well as an act of folly in it self; his unchangeableness then might stifle such desires: But if we ask according to his Will and according to our reasonable wants, what ground have we to make such a ridiculous argument? He hath Willed every thing that may be for our good, if we perform the condition he hath required; and hath put it upon record, that we may know it and regulate our desires and supplications according to it: If we will not seek him, his immutability cannot be a bar, but our



our own folly is the cause; and by our neglect we despoil him of this perfection as to us, and either imply that he is not sincere, and means not as he speaks; or that he is as changeable as the Wind, sometimes this thing sometimes that, and not at all to be confided in. If we ask according to his revealed Will, the unchangeableness of his Nature will assure us of the Grant; and what a presumption would it be in a Creature dependent upon his Sovereign, to ask that which he knows he has declared his Will against; since there is no good we can want, but he hath promised to give, upon our sincere and ardent desire for it?

God hath decreed to give this or that to Man, but conditionally, and by the means of *enquiring* after him, and *asking* for it: \* *Ask and you shall receive*, as much as to say, you shall not receive unless you ask. When the highest promises are made, God expects they should be put in suite: Our Saviour joyns the Promise and the Petition together; the Promise to encourage the Petition, and the Petition to enjoy the Promise: He doth not say *perhaps* it shall be given, but *it shall*, that is, it certainly shall; your heavenly Father is unchangeably willing to give you those things. We must depend upon his Immutability for the thing, and submit to his Wisdom for the time. Prayer is an acknowledgment of our dependence upon God, which dependence could have no firm foundation without unchangeableness. Prayer doth not desire any change in God, but is offered to God that he would confer those things which he hath immutably willed to communicate, but he willed them not without Prayer as the means of bestowing them. The light of the Sun is ordered for our comfort, for the discovery of visible things, for the ripening the fruits of the Earth; but withal tis required that we use our faculty of seeing, that we employ our industry in sowing and planting, and expose our fruits to the view of the Sun, that they may receive the influence of it. If a man shuts his eyes, and complains that the Sun is changed into darkness, it would be ridiculous; the Sun is not changed, but we alter our selves; Nor is God changed in not giving us the blessings he hath promised, because he hath promised in the way of a due address to him, and opening our Souls to receive his influence; and to this, his Immutability is the greatest encouragement.

\* Ezek. 36. 37.  
Mat. 7. 7.

3. This shews how contrary Man is to God in regard of his inconstancy. What an infinite distance is there between the immutable God and mutable Man, and how should we bewail this flittingness in our Nature?

There is a Mutability in us as Creatures, and a Creature cannot but be mutable by Nature, otherwise it were not a Creature but God. The establishment of any Creature is from Grace and Gift; Naturally we tend to nothing, as we come from nothing: This Creature-mutability is not our sin, yet it should cause us to lye down under a sense of our own nothingness, in the presence of the Creator. The Angels as Creatures, though not corrupt, cover their faces before him: And the Arguments God useth to humble Job, though a fallen Creature, are not from his Corruption; for I do not remember that he taxed him with that; but from the greatness of his Majesty and excellency of his Nature declared in his Works\*. And therefore Men that have no sense of God, and humility before him, forget that they are Creatures as well as corrupt ones.

\* Job. 38. 39.  
40. 41.

How great is the distance between God and us, in regard of our inconstancy in good, which is not natural to us by Creation? For the mind and affections were regular, and by the great Artificer were pointed to God as the Object of Knowledge and Love. We have the same faculties of Understanding, Will and Affection as Adam had in Innocence; but not with the same Light, the same Bias and the same Ballast. Man by his fall, wounded his head and heart; the wound in his head made him unstable in the Truth, and that in his heart unstedfast in his Affections: He changed himself from the Image of God to that of the Devil, from Innocence to Corruption; and from an ability to be stedfast, to a perpetual Inconstancy: His Silver became Dross, and his Wine was mixed with Water.\* He changed,

\* Isa. 1. 22.

1. To inconstancy in Truth, opposed to the Immutability of Knowledge in God. How are our Minds floating between Ignorance and Knowledge? Truth in us is like those *Ephemera*, Creatures of a days continuance, springs up in the Morning and expires at Night. How soon doth that fly away from us, which we have had, not only some weak flashes of, but which we have learned and have had some relish of? The De-

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*vil stood not in the Truth,\** and therefore manages his Engines to make us as unstable as himself: Our Minds reel, and corrupt reasonings overway us; like Sponges we suck up Water, and a light compression makes us spout it out again. Truths are not engraven upon our hearts, but writ as in Dust, defaced by the next puff of Wind; *carried about with every Wind of Doctrin*, Eph. 4. 14. Like a Ship without a Pilot and Sails, at the courtesy of the next Storm; or like Clouds that are Tenants to the Wind and Sun, moved by the Wind and melted by the Sun. The *Galatians* were no sooner called into the Grace of God, but they were *renewed from it\**; Some have been reported to have *menstruam fidem*, kept an Opinion for a Month; and many are like him that believed the Souls Immortality, no longer than he had *Plato's Book* of that Subject in his hand\*: One likens such to *Children*; they play with Truths as Children do with Babies, one while embrace them, and a little after throw them into the Dirt. How soon do we forget what the Truth is delivered to us, and what it represented us to be\*? Is it not a thing to be bewailed, that Man should be such a Weathercock, turned about with every Breath of Wind, and shifting Aspects as the Wind shifts Points?

2. *Inconstancy in Will, and Affections opposed to the Immutability of Will in God.* We waver between God and *Baal*; and while we are not only resolving, but upon motion a little way, look back with a hankring after *Sodom*; Sometimes lifted up with heavenly intentions, and presently cast down with earthly cares; like a Ship that by an advancing Wave seems to aspire to Heaven, and the next fall of the Waves makes it sink down to the Depths. We change Purposes oftner than Fashions; and our Resolutions are like Letters in water, whereof no mark remains: We will be as *John* to day to love Christ, and as *Judas* to morrow to betray him, and by an unworthy levity, pass into the Camp of the Enemies of God; resolv'd to be as holy as *Angels* in the Morning, when the Evening beholds us as impure as Devils: How often do we hate what before we loved, and shun what before we longed for? And our Resolutions are like Vessels of Chrystal, which break at the first knock, are dash'd in pieces by the next Temptation. *Saul* resolv'd not to persecute *David* any more, but you soon find him upon his old game. *Pharaoh* more than once *promised*, and probably resolv'd to let *Israel* go; but at the end of the storm his purposes vanish.\* When an Affliction pincheth Men, they intend to change their course; and the next news of ease changes their intentions: Like a Bow, not fully bent in their inclinations, they cannot reach the Mark, but live many years between resolutions of Obedience and affections to *Rebellion\**: And what promises men make to God are often the fruit of their Passion, their Fear, not of their Will. The *Israelites* were startled at the terrors wherewith the Law was delivered, and promised obedience\*, but a Month after forgot them, and make a *Golden Calf*, and in the sight of *Sinai* call for, and dance before their Gods\*; Never people more unconstant. *Peter* who vowed an Allegiance to his Master, and a Courage to stick to him, forswears him almost with the same breath. Those that cry out with a zeal, *the Lord he is God*, shortly after return to the service of their Idols.\* That which seems to be our pleasure this day, is our vexation to morrow: A Fear of a Judgment puts us into a religious pang, and a Love to our Lusts reduceth us to a rebellious inclination; As soon as the danger is over, the Saint is forgotten: Salvation and Damnation present themselves to us, touch us and ingender some weak wishes, which are dissolved by the next allurements of a carnal interest. No hold can be taken of our promises; no credit is to be given to our resolutions.

3. *Inconstancy in practice.* How much beginning in the Spirit, and ending in the Flesh; one day in the Sanctuary, another in the Stews; clear in the morning as the Sun, and clouded before noon; in Heaven by an excellency of Gifts, in Hell by a course of prophaness? Like a Flower, which some mention, that changes its colour three times a day; one part white, then purple, then yellow. The Spirit lutes against the Flesh, and the Flesh quickly triumphs over the Spirit. In a good man how often is there a Spiritual Lethargy? Tho' he doth not openly defame God, yet he doth not alwayes glorifie him: He doth not forsake the truth, but he doth not alwayes make the attainment of it, and settlement in it his business. This levity discovers it self in religious duties, *when I would do good, evil is present with me.* Never more present, than when we have a mind to do

\* Rom. 7. 21.

\* Exod. 8. 27, 32.

\* Psal. 73. 17.

\* Exod. 20. 19.

\* Exod. 32.

\* 1 Kings. 12. 39.

\* See *Seagwick's* Christ's Counsel p. 230.

\* James 1. 23. 24.



do good, and never more present than when we have a mind to do the best and greatest good: How hard is it to make our thoughts and affections keep their stand & place them upon a good Object, and they will be frisking from it, as a Bird from one bough, one fruit to another. We vary postures according to the various objects we meet with. The course of the World is a very airy thing, suted to the uncertain motions of that Prince of the power of the Air, which works in it.

\* Eph. 2. 2.

This ought to be bewail'd by us. Tho we may stand fast in the truth, tho we may spin our resolutions into a firm web, tho the Spirit may triumph over the flesh in our practice, yet we ought to bewail it, because inconstancy is our nature, and what fixedness we have in good is from grace. What we find practised by most men, is natural to all\*: *As face answers to face in a glass*, so doth heart to heart\*; a face in the glass is not more like a natural face, whose image it is, than one mans heart is naturally like another.

\* Lawrence of Faith p. 262.  
\* Pro. 27. 19.

1. *'Tis natural to those out of the Church.* Nebuchadnezzar is so affected with Daniels prophetick Spirit, that he would have none accounted the true God, but the God of Daniel\*. How soon doth this notion slip from him, and an image must be set up for all to worship, upon pain of almost cruel painful death? Daniels God is quite forgotten: The miraculous deliverance of the three Children for not worshipping his Image, makes him settle a Decree to secure the Honour of God from the reproach of his Subjects\*; yet a little while after, you have him strutting in his Palace, as if there were no God but himself.

\* Dan. 2. 47.

\* Dan. 3. 29.

2. *'Tis natural to those in the Church.* The Israelites were the only Church God had in the World, and a notable Example of inconstancy. After the Miracles of Egypt they murmured against God, when they saw Pharaoh marching with an Army at their Heels. They desired food, and soon nauseated the Manna, they were before fond of, when they came into Canaan: They sometimes worshipped God, and sometimes Idols, not only the Idols of one Nation, but of all their Neighbours: In which regard God calls this his Heritage a Speckled Bird\*; a Peacock saith Hierom, inconstant, made up of varieties of Idolatrous colours and Ceremonies.

\* Jer. 12. 9.

This levity of Spirit is the root of all mischief; it scatters our thoughts in the Service of God, it is the cause of all revolts and Apostacies from him, it makes us unfit to receive the communications of God; whatsoever we hear is like words writ in sand, ruffled out by the next gale; whatsoever is put into us is like precious liquor in a palsie hand soon spilt: It breeds distrust of God, when we have an uncertain judgment of him, we are not like to confide in him: an uncertain judgment will be followed with a distrustful heart. In fine, where it is prevalent, it is a certain sign of ungodliness; to be driven with the wind like chaffe, and to be ungodly is all one, in the judgment of the Holy Ghost, Psal. 1. 4. the ungodly are like the chaff which the wind drives away, which signifies not their destruction, but their disposition, for their destruction is inferred from it, ver. 5. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in judgment.

How contrary is this to the unchangeable God, who is alwayes the same, and would have us the same, in our religious Promises and Resolutions for good?

4. If God be immutable, 'tis sad news to those that are resolved in wickedness, or careless of returning to that duty he requires. Sinners must not expect, that God will alter his will, make a breach upon his nature, and violate his own Word to gratifie their lusts: No, 'tis not reasonable God should dishonour himself to secure them, and cease to be God, that they may continue to be wicked, by changing his own nature, that they may be unchanged in their vanity. God is the same, goodness is as amiable in his sight, and Sin as abominable in his eyes now, as it was at the beginning of the world: Being the same God, he is the same Enemy to the Wicked as the same Friend to the Righteous; He is the same in Knowledge, and cannot forget sinful acts; He is the same in Will, and cannot approve of unrighteous Practices: Goodness cannot but be alway the Object of his Love, and Wickedness cannot but be alway the Object of his Hatred: And as his aversion to Sin is alway the same, so as he hath been in his Judgments upon Sinners, the same he will be still; for the same perfection of Immutability belongs to his Justice for the punishment of Sin, as to his Holiness for his disaffection to Sin. Though the Covenant of Works



was changeable by the crime of man violating it; yet it was unchangeable in regard of Gods justice vindicating it, which is inflexible in the punishment of the breaches of his Law. The Law had a preceptive part, and a minatory part; When man changed the observation of the Precept, the righteous nature of God could not null the execution of the threatening: He could not upon the account of this perfection neglect his just word and countenance the unrighteous transgression. Tho there were no more rational Creatures in being but Adam and Eve, yet God subjected them to that death he had assured them of: and from this immutability of his Will, ariseth the necessity of the suffering of the Son of God, for the relief of the apostate Creature. His Will in the *second Covenant* is as unchangeable, as that in the *first*, only repentance is settled as the condition of the *second*, which was not indulged in the *first*; and without repentance the sinner must inevitably perish or God must change his nature: There must be a change in man, there can be none in God; *his bow is bent his arrows are ready, if the wicked do not turn.* \* There is not an Atheist, an hypocrite, a prophane person, that ever was upon the Earth, but Gods Soul abhorred him as such, and the like he will abhor for ever: While any therefore continue so, they may sooner expect the Heavens should roul as they please, the Sun stand still at their order, the Stars change their course at their beck, than that God should change his nature, which is opposite to prophane and vanity: *Whobath hardened himself against him and hath prospered?* \*

\* Psal. 7. 11.

\* Job 9. 4.

#### Use 2. Of comfort.

The *immutability of a good God is a strong ground of consolation.* Subjects with a good Prince to live for ever, as being loath to change him; but care not how soon they are rid of an Oppressor. This unchangeableness of Gods Will, shews him as ready to accept any that come to him as ever he was; so that we may with confidence make our addresses to him, since he cannot change his affections to goodness. The fear of change in a friend hinders a full reliance upon him; An assurance of stability encourages hope and confidence. This attribute is the strongest Prop for faith in all our addresses; tis not a single perfection, but the glory of all those, that belong to his nature; for he is *unchangeable in his love*, Jer. 31. 3. *in his truth*, Psal. 117. 2. The more solemn Revelation of himself in this name *Jehovah*, which signifies chiefly his Eternity and immutability, was to support the Israelites faith, in expectation of a deliverance from Egypt, that he had not retracted his purpose, and *his promise* made to Abraham for giving Canaan to his posterity. \* Herein is the basis and strength of all his promises; therefore saith the Psalmist, *those that know thy name, will put their trust in thee*; \* Those that are Spiritually acquainted with thy name *Jehovah*, and have a true sense of it upon their hearts, will put their trust in thee. His goodness could not be distrusted, if his unchangeableness were well apprehended and considered: All distrust would fly before it as darkness before the Sun; it only gets advantage of us, when we are not well grounded in his name; and if ever we trusted God, we have the same reason to trust him for ever. Isa. 26. 4. *Trust in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength*, or as tis in the Hebrew, *a Rock of Ages*; that is, perpetually unchangeable. We find the traces of Gods immutability in the Creatures; he has by his peremptory decree set bounds to the Sea, *hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.* \* Do we fear the Sea overflowing us in this Island? No, because of his fixt decree: And is not his promise in his Word, as unchangeable as his Word concerning inanimate things as good a ground to rest upon?

\* Exod. 3. 14,

Is. 16. 17.

\* Psal. 9. 10.

\* Job. 38. 11.

\* Isa. 54. 10.

\* 2 Tim. 1. 9.

1. *The Covenant stands unchangeable.* Mutable Creatures break their Leagues and Covenants, and snap them asunder like Sampsons Cords, when they are not accommodated to their interests. But an unchangeable God keeps his; *the Mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, nor shall the Covenant of my peace be removed.* \* The Heaven and Earth shall sooner fall asunder, and the strongest and firmest parts of the Creation crumble to dust sooner than one Iota of my Covenant shall fail. It depends upon the unchangeableness of his Will and the unchangeableness of his word, and therefore is called *the immutability of his Counsel*, Heb. 6. 17. Tis the fruit of the everlasting purpose of God; whence the Apostle links *purpose* and *grace* together. \* A Covenant with a Nation may be changeable, because it may not be built upon the Eternal purpose of God, to

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put his fear in the heart ; but with respect to the Creatures obedience. Thus God chose Jerusalem, as the place wherein he would dwell for ever, \* yet he threatens to depart from them, when they had broken Covenant with him, and the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the City to the Mountain on the east side. \* The Covenant of grace doth not run I will be your God, if you will be my people : But I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Hos. 2. 19. &c. I will betroth thee to me for ever, I will say, thou art my people, and they shall say, thou art my God. His everlasting purpose, is to write his Laws in the hearts of the elect. He puts a condition to his Covenant of Grace, the condition of faith, and he resolves to work that condition in the hearts of the Elect ; and therefore believers have two immutable pillars for their support, stronger than those erected by Solomon at the porch of the Temple, 1 Kings 7. 21. called Jakin and Boaz, to note the firmness of that building dedicated to God ; these are Election or the standing Counsel of God, and the Covenant of grace : He will not revoke the Covenant and blot the names of his elect out of the book of life.

2. Perseverance is ascertained. It consists not with the Majesty of God to call a person effectually to himself to day, to make him fit for his Eternal love, to give him faith, and take away that faith to morrow ; his effectual call is the fruit of his Eternal Election, and that Counsel hath no other foundation, but his constant and unchangeable Will ; a foundation that stands sure, and therefore called the foundation of God, and not of the Creature ; the foundation of God stands sure, the Lord knows who are his. \* Tis not founded upon our own natural strength, it may be then subject to change, as all the products of nature are : The fallen Angels had Created Grace in their innocency, but lost it by their fall. \* Were this the foundation of the Creature, it might soon be shaken ; since man after his revolt can ascribe nothing constant to himself, but his own inconstancy : But the foundation is not in the infirmity of nature, but the strength of grace, and of the grace of God who is immutable, who wants not vertue to be able nor kindness to be willing to preserve his own foundation. To what purpose doth our Saviour tell his Disciples, their names were written in Heaven, \* but to mark the infallible certainty of their Salvation, by an opposition to those things which perish and have their names written in the Earth ; \* or upon the sand, where they may be defaced ? And why should Christ order his Disciples to rejoyce, that their names were written in Heaven, if God were changeable to blot them out again ? or why should the Apostle assure us, that tho God had rejected the greatest part of the Jews, he had not therefore rejected his people elected according to his purpose and immutable Counsel ; because there are none of the elect of God but will come to Salvation ? For saith he, the Election hath obtained it ; \* that is, all those that are of the Election have obtained it, and the others are hardened : Where the Seal of Sanctification is stampd, it is a testimony of Gods Election, and that foundation shall stand sure. The foundation of the Lord stands sure having this Seal, the Lord knows who are his, that is the foundation, the naming the name of Christ, or believing in Christ, and departing from iniquity is the Seal. \* As tis impossible, when God calls those things that are not, but that they should spring up into being and appear before him : So it is impossible, but that the seed of God by his Eternal purpose, should be brought to a Spiritual life ; and that calling cannot be retracted ; for that gift and calling is without repentance. \* And when repentance is removed from God in regard of some works, the immutability of those works is declared : And the reason of that immutability is their pure dependance on the Eternal favour and unchangeable grace of God, \* [purpos'd in himself] and not upon the mutability of the Creature. Hence their happiness is not as Patents among men, quam diu bene se gesserint, so long as they behave themselves well, but they have a promise, that they shall behave themselves so as never wholly to depart from God, Jer. 32. 40. I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. God will not turn from them, to do them good, and promiseth that they shall not turn from him for ever or forsake him : And the bottom of it is the everlasting Covenant, and therefore believing and sealing, for security, are linkt together. Eph. 1. 13. And When God doth inwardly teach us his Law, he puts in a Will not depart from it, Psalm 119. 102. I have



not departed from thy Judgments; what is the reason? For thou hast taught me.

3. By this, *Eternal Happiness is ensured.* This is the *Inference* made from the Eternity and Unchangeableness of God in the verse following the *Text*, verse 28. *The Children of thy Servants shall continue, and their Seed shall be established before thee;* This is the sole conclusion drawn from those Perfections of God solemnly asserted before. The Children which the *Prophets* and *Apostles* have begotten to thee, shall be totally delivered from the reliques of their Apostacy and the punishment due to them, and rendred partakers of Immortality with thee, as Sons to dwell in their Fathers house for ever. The Spirit begins a spiritual Life here, to fit for an immutable Life in Glory hereafter; where Believers shall be placed upon a Throne that cannot be shaken, and possess a Crown that shall not be taken off their heads for ever.

### 3. Use. Of Exhortation.

1. *Let a sense of the changeableness and uncertainty of all other things beside God, be upon us.* There are as many changes as there are figures in the world. The whole fashion of the world is a transient thing; every man may say as *Job*, \**Changes and War are against me.* Lot chose the Plain of Sodom, because it was the richer Soyl; He was but a little time there before he was taken Prisoner, and his substance made the Spoil of his Enemy; That is again restored; but a while after, Fire from Heaven devours his Wealth, though his Person was secur'd from the Judgment by a special Providence. We burn with a desire to settle our selves; but mistake the way, and build Castles in the Air, which vanish like bubbles of Sope in water.

And therefore,

1. *Let not our thoughts dwell much upon them.* Do but consider those Souls that are in the possession of an unchangeable God, that behold his never fading Glory! Would it not be a kind of Hell to them, to have their thoughts starting out to these things, or find any desire in themselves to the changeable trifles of the Earth? Nay, have we not reason to think, that they cover their faces with shame, that ever they should have such a weakness of Spirit when they were here below, as to spend more thoughts upon them than were necessary for this present Life; much more that they should at any time value and court them above an unchangeable Good? Do they not disdain themselves that they should ever debase the immutable perfections of God, as to have neglecting thoughts of him at any time, for the entertainment of such a mean and inconstant Rival?

2. *Much less should we trust in them or rejoyce in them.* The best things are mutable, and things of such a Nature are not fit Objects of confidence. Trust not in Riches, they have their wanes as well as increases; they rise sometimes like a Torrent and flow in upon men, but resemble also a Torrent in as suddain a fall and departure, and leave nothing but slime behind them. Trust not in Honour, all the Honour and Applause in the World, is no better than an Inheritance of Wind, which the Pilot is not sure of, but shifts from one corner to another, and stands not perpetually in the same point of the Heavens. How in a few Ages did the house of David a great Monarch, and a man after Gods own heart, descend to a mean condition, and all the glory of that house shut up in the stock of a Carpenter? David's Sheep-hook was turned into a Scepter, and the Scepter by the same hand of Providence turned into a Hatchet in Joseph his Descendent.

Rejoyce not immoderately in wisdom; That and Learning languish with Age. A wound in the head may impair that which is the Glory of a Man. If an Organ be out of frame, Folly may succeed, and all a mans Prudence be wound up in an irrecoverable Dotage. Nebuchadnezzar was no Fool, yet by a suddain hand of God he became not only a Fool or a mad Man, but a kind of Brute. Rejoyce not in strength; that decays, and a mighty Man may live to see his strong Arm withered, and a Grass-hopper to become a Burthen.\* *The strong men shall bow themselves, and the Grinders shall cease because they are few.\** Nor rejoyce in Children; they are like Birds upon a Tree, that make a little chirping musick, and presently fall into the Fowlers Net. Little did Job expect such sad news as the loss of all his Progeny at a blow, when the Messenger knocked at his Gate: And such changes happen oftentimes, when our expectations of comfort and a contentment in them are at the highest. How often doth a string crack when the Musitian hath wound it up to a just height for

\* Ecclef. 12. 5.  
\* V. 3.



for a Tune, and all his pains and delight marr'd in a Moment? Nay, all these things change while we are using them, like Ice that melts between our fingers, and Flowers that wither while we are smelling to them: The *Apostle* gave them a good title, when he called them *uncertain riches*, and thought it a strong argument to dissuade them *from trusting in them*.<sup>\*</sup> The wealth of the Merchant depends upon the Winds and Waves, and the revenue of the Husbandman upon the Clouds; and since they depend upon those things which are used to express the most changeableness, they can be no fit Object for trust. Besides, God sometimes kindles a *Fire under all a mans Glory*, which doth insensibly consume it<sup>\*</sup>; and while we have them, the fear of losing them renders us not very happy in the fruition of them; we can scarce tell whether they are contentments or no, because sorrow follows them so close at the heels. 'Tis not an unnecessary exhortation for good men; the best men have been apt to place too much trust in them. *David* thought himself immutable in his Prosperity; and such thoughts could not be without some immoderate outlets of the heart to them, and confidences in them: And *Job* promised himself to dye in his Nest, and *multiply his days as the Sand* without any interruption<sup>\*</sup>; but he was mistaken and disappointed.

\* 1 Tim. 6. 17.

\* Isa. 10. 15.

\* Job. 22. 13.  
17. 20.

Let me add this; trust not in men who are as inconstant as any thing else, and often change their most ardent affections into implacable hatred: And though their affections may not be changed, their Power to help you may. *Hamans* Friends that depended on him one day, were crest-fallen the next, when their Patron was to exchange his Chariot of State for an ignominious Gallows.

3. *Prefer an immutable God before mutable Creatures.* Is it not a horrible thing to see what we are, and what we possess, daily crumbling to dust, and in a continual flux from us; and not seek out something that is permanent, and always abides the same, for our portion? In God, or *Wisdom* which is Christ, there is *substance*,<sup>\*</sup> in which respect he is opposed to all the things in the world, that are but shadows, that are shorter or longer according to the motion of the Sun; mutable also, by every little body that intervenes. God is subject to no decay within, to no force without; nothing in his own nature can change him from what he is, and there is no Power above can hinder him from being what he will to the Soul: He is an Ocean of all Perfection; He wants nothing without himself to render him blessed, which may allure him to a change: His Creatures can want nothing out of him to make them happy, whereby they may be inticed to prefer any thing before him. If we enjoy other things, 'tis by Gods donation, who can as well withdraw them as bestow them; and it is but a reasonable as well as a necessary thing, to endeavour the enjoyment of the immutable Benefactor, rather than his revocable Gifts.

\* Pro. 8. 21.

If the Creatures had a sufficient vertue in themselves to ravish our thoughts and engross our Souls; yet when we take a prospect of a fixed and unchangeable Being, what beauty, what strength have any of those things to vie with him? How can they bear up and maintain their interest against a lively thought and sense of God? All the Glory of them would fly before him like that of the Stars before the Sun: They were once nothing, they may be nothing again; as their own nature brought them not out of nothing, so their Nature secures them not from being reduced to nothing. What an unhappiness is it, to have our affections set upon that which retains something of its *non esse* with its *esse*, its not being with its being; that lives indeed, but in a continual Flux, and may lose that pleasureableness to morrow which charms us today?

2. This Doctrine will teach us *Patience under such Providences as declare his unchangeable Will*. The rectitude of our Wills consists in conformity to the Divine, as discovered in his Words and manifested in his Providence, which are the effluxes of his immutable Will. The time of tryal is appointed by his *immutable Will*<sup>\*</sup>; 'tis not in the Power of the Sufferer's Will to shorten it, nor in the Power of the Enemies Will to lengthen it. Whatsoever doth happen, hath been decreed by God, (*Eccles. 6. 10. That which hath been is named already*) therefore to murmur or be discontented, is to contend with God, who is mightier than we to maintain his own purposes. God doth act all things conveniently for that immutable end intended by himself, and according to the reason of his own Divine Will, in the true point of time most proper for it and for us, not too soon or too slow, because he is unchangeable in

\* Dan. 1

Know-



knowledge and Wisdom. God doth not act any thing barely by an immutable Will, but by an immutable Wisdom, and an unchangeable Rule of Goodness; and therefore we should not only acquiesce in what he works, but have a complacency in it; and by having our Wills thus knitting themselves with the immutable Will of God, we attain some degree of likeness to him in his own Unchangeableness; When therefore God hath manifested his Will in opening his Decree to the world by his work of Providence, we must cease all disputes against it, and with Aaron hold our peace, though the affliction be very smart, *\* All Flesh must be silent before God*; For whatsoever is his Counsel, shall stand and cannot be recall'd; all struggling against it, is like a brittle Glass contending with a Rock; For *if he cut off and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?* Job. 11. 10. Nothing can help us, if he hath determined to afflict us; as nothing can hurt us, if he hath determined to secure us. The more clearly God hath evidenced this or that to be his Will, the more sinful is our struggling against it. Pharaoh's sin was the greater in keeping Israel, by how much the more Gods Miracles had been Demonstrations of his settled Will to deliver them. Let nothing snatch our hearts to a contradiction to him, but let us fear and give Glory to him, when the hour of Judgment which he hath appointed *is come* *\**; that is, comply with the unchangeable will of his Precept, the more he declares the immutable will of his Providence: We must not think, God must disgrace his Nature and change his Proceedings for us: Better the Creature should suffer, than God be impair'd in any of his Perfections. If God changed his Purpose, he would change his Nature. Patience is the way to perform the immutable Will of God, and a means to attain a gracious Immutability for our selves by receiving the Promise. Heb. 10. 36. *Ye have need of Patience, that after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the Promise.*

3. This Doctrine will teach us *to imitate God in this perfection by striving to be immovable in goodness.* God never goes back from himself, he finds nothing better than himself for which he should change; and can we find any thing better than God, to allure our hearts to a change from him? The Sun never declines from the Ecliptick line, nor should we from the paths of Holiness. A stedfast obedience is encouraged by an unchangeable God to reward it, 1 Cor. 15. 58. *Be stedfast and immovable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.* Unstedfastness is the note of an Hypocrite, Psal. 78. 37. stedfastness in that which is good, is the mark of a Saint, 'tis the Character of a righteous person to *keep the truth*, Isa. 26. 2. And it is as positively said, *that he that abides not in the Doctrine of Christ, hath not God*, 2 Epist. John 9. but he that doth, *hath both the Father and the Son*. So much of uncertainty, so much of nature; so much of firmness in duty, so much of Grace. We can never honour God unless we finish his work; as Christ did not glorifie God but in *finishing the work God gave him to do*. *\** The nearer the world comes to an end, the more is Gods immutability seen in his promises and predictions, and the more must our unchangeableness be seen in our obedience, Heb. 10. 23, 25. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering and so much the more as you see the day approaching.* The Christian Jews were to be the more tenacious of their faith, the nearer they saw the day approaching, the day of *Jerusalem's destruction* prophesied of by Daniel, *\** which accomplishment must be a great argument to establish the Christian Jews in the profession of Christ to be the *Messiah*; because the destruction of the City was not to be, before the cutting off the *Messiah*. Let us be therefore constant in our profession and service of God, and not suffer our selves to be driven from him by the ill usage, or flatter'd from him by the Caresses of the world.

1. 'Tis reasonable. If God be unchangeable in doing us good, it is reason we should be unchangeable in doing him service: If he assure us that he is our God, our *I am*, he would also that we should be his people. His we are. If he declare himself constant in his promises, he expects we should be so in our obedience: As a spouse, we should be unchangeably faithful to him as a Husband: As subjects, have an unchangeable allegiance to him as our Prince. He would not have us *faithful* to him for an hour or a day, but *to the death*; *\** And it is reason we should be his; and if we be his Children, imitate him in his constancy of his holy purposes.

2. This



2. *Tis our glory and interest.* To be a reed shaken with every wind is no commendation among men, and tis less a ground of praise with God. It was *Jobs* glory, that he held fast his integrity; \* *In all this Job sinned not*; In all this, which whole Cities and Kingdoms would have thought ground enough of high exclamations against God: And also against the temptation of his Wife, he retained his integrity, Job. 2. 9. *Dost thou still retain thy integrity?* The Devil, who by Gods permission stript him of his goods and health, yet could not strip him of his grace. As a Traveller, when the wind and snow beats in his face, wraps his cloak more closely about him to preserve that and himself. Better we had never made profession, than afterwards to abandon it; such a withering profession serves for no other use than to aggravate the crime, if any of us fly like a coward or revolt like a Traytor: What profit will it be to a Souldier, if he hath withstood many assaults and turn his back at last? If we would have God Crown us with an immutable glory, we must Crown our beginnings with a happy perseverance, Rev. 2. 10. *Be faithful to the Death and I will give thee a Crown of life*: Not as tho this were the cause to merit it, but a necessary condition to possess it: Constancy in good is accompanied with an immutability of Glory.

3. *By an unchangeable disposition to good we should begin the happiness of Heaven upon Earth.* This is the perfection of blessed Spirits, those that are nearest to God as Angels and glorified Souls, they are immutable: Not indeed by nature, but by grace; yet not only by a necessity of grace, but a liberty of Will: Grace will not let them change; and that grace doth animate their Wills that they would not change; an immutable God fills their understandings and affections and gives satisfaction to their desires. The Saints when they were below, tried other things and found them deficient: But now they are so fully satisfied with the beatifick vision, that if *Satan* should have entrance among the Angels and Sons of God, tis not likely he should have any influence upon them; he could not present to their understandings any thing, that could either at the first glance or upon a deliberate view be preferable to what they enjoy and are fixed in.

Well then let us be immoveable in the Knowledge and Love of God. Tis the delight of God to see his Creatures resemble him in what they are able. Let not our Affections to him be as *Jonah's* Goard, growing up in one Night and withering the next. Let us not only fight a good Fight, but do so till we have finished our course, and imitate God in an unchangeableness of holy purposes; and to that purpose, examin our selves daily what fixedness we have arrived unto; And to prevent any temptation to a revolt, let us often possess our minds with thoughts of the immutability of Gods Nature and Will, which like Fire under Water, will keep a good matter boiling up in us, and make it both retain and increase its heat.

4. Let this Doctrine teach us to have recourse to God, and aim at a near conjunction with him. When our Spirits begin to flag, and a cold aguish temper is drawing upon us; let us go to him, who can only fix our hearts, and furnish us with a Ballast to render them steadfast. As he is only immutable in his Nature, so he is the only Principle of Immutability as well as Being in the Creature. Without his Grace, we shall be as changeable in our appearances as a *Chameleon*, and in our turnings as the Wind. When *Peter* trusted in himself, he changed to the worse: It was his Masters recourse to God for him that preserved in him a reducing Principle, which changed him again for the better and fixed him in it.\*

It will be our Interest to be in conjunction with him, that moves not about with the Heavens, nor is turned by the force of Nature, nor changed by the accidents in the world; but sits in the Heavens, moving all things by his powerful Arm, according to his infinite Skill: While we have him for our God, we have his Immutability as well as any other Perfection of his Nature for our advantage; The nearer we come to him, the more stability we shall have in our selves; the further from him, the more liable to change. The Line that is nearest to the place where it is first fixed, is least subject to motion; the further it is stretched from it, the weaker it is, and more liable to be shaken. Let us also affect those things which are nearest to him in this perfection; the righteousness of Christ that shall never wear out, and the graces of the Spirit that shall never burn out; by this means, what God is infinitely by Nature, we shall come to be finitely immutable by Grace, as much as the capacity of a Creature can contain.







# GODS OMNIPRESENCE.

Jeremiah 23. 24.

*Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, saith the Lord?*

**T**HE occasion of this Discourse begins *vers. 16.* where God admonisheth the people, not to hearken to the words of the false Prophets which spake a Vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They made the people vain by their Insinuations of Peace, when God had proclaimed War and Calamity; and uttered the Dreams of their Phantries, and not the Visions of the Lord; and so turned the people from the expectation of the evil day which God had threatned, *ver. 17.* *They say still unto them, that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace: and they say unto every one that walks after the Imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.* And they invalidate the Prophecies of those, whom God had sent, *v. 18.* *Who hath stood in the Counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his word? Who hath marked his word, and heard it? Who hath stood in the Counsel of the Lord?* Are they acquainted with the Secrets of God more than we? Who have the word of the Lord, if we have not? Or, it may be a continuation of Gods Admonition: Believe not those Prophets; for who of them have been acquainted with the Secrets of God? or by what means should they learn his Counsel? No, assure your selves, *a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind, it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. v. 19.* A whirlwind shall come from Babylon, 'tis just at the door, and shall not be blown over, it shall fall with a witness upon the wicked people, and the deceiving Prophets, and sweep them together into Captivity. For *v. 20.* *The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart.* My fury shall not be a childish fury that quickly languisheth, but shall accomplish whatsoever I threaten; and burn so hot, as not to be cool, till I have satisfied my vengeance; *in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly, v. 20.* when the storm shall beat upon you, you shall then know, that the Calamities shall answer the words you have heard. When the Conquerour shall waste your Grounds, demolish your Houses, and manacle your hands, then shall you consider it, and have the wishes of Fools, that you had had your eyes in your heads before; you shall then know the falseness of your Guides, and the truth of my Prophets, and discern who stood in the Counsel of the Lord, and subscribe to the Messages, I have sent you.

Some understand this not only of the *Babylonish* Captivity, but refer it to the time of Christ, and the false Doctrine of mens own Righteousness in opposition to the Righteousness of God; understanding this *Verse* to be partly a threatning of Wrath, which shall end in an advantage to the *Jews*, who shall in the latter time consider the falseness of their Notions about a legal Righteousness, and so make it a promise; they shall then know the intent of the Scripture, and in the latter days, the latter end of the World, when time shall be near the rousing up, they shall reflect



upon themselves; they shall look upon him whom they have pierced; and till these latter days, they shall be hardened, and believe nothing of Evangelical truths.

Now God denieth that he sent those Prophets, v. 21. *I have not sent these Prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.* They have intruded themselves without a Commission from me, whatsoever their Brags are. The reason to prove it, is v. 22. *If they had stood in my Counsel, if they had been instructed, and inspired by me, they would have caused my people to hear my words; they would have regulated themselves according to my word, and have turned them from their evil way; i. e. endeavoured to shake down their false confidences of peace, and make them sensible of their false Notions of me, and my ways.* Now because those false Prophets could not be so impudent as to boast, that they prophesied in the Name of God, when they had not Commission from him, unless they had some secret Sentiment, that they and their intentions were hid from the Knowledge and Eye of God; He adds, v. 23. *Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him?* Have I not the power of seeing and knowing what they do, what they design, what they think? Why should I not have such a power, since *I fill Heaven and Earth* by my essence? *Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off?* He excludes here the Doctrine of those that excluded the Providence of God from extending its self to the inferior things of the earth; which error was ancient, as ancient as the time of Job, as appears by their opinion, That Gods eyes were hood-winkt and muffled by the thickness of the Clouds, and could not pierce through their dark and dense body: \* *Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not.*

\* Job. 22. 14.

\* Munster. 1<sup>re</sup> tablus. Castilio Oecolamp.

\* Some refer it to time. Do you imagine me a God new fram'd like your Idols, beginning a little time ago, and not existing before the foundation of the World; yea, from Eternity? *a God afar off*, further than your acutest understandings can reach? I am of a longer standing, and you ought to know my Majesty. But it rather refers to place, than time. Do you think I do not behold every thing in the earth, as well as in Heaven? Am I lockt up within the walls of my Palace, and cannot peep out to behold the things done in the World? or that am I so linkt to pleasure in the place of my Glory, as earthly Kings are in their Courts, that I have no mind, or leasure to take notice of the carrisges of men upon earth? God doth not say, He was a far off, but only gives an account of the inward thoughts of their minds, or at least, of the Language express'd by their Actions.

The Interrogation carries in it a strong Affirmation, and assures us more of Gods care, and the folly of men in not considering it. *Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places?* Heb. in *Hiddenesses*, in the deepest Cells: What? are you besotted by your base Lusts, that you think me a God careless, ignorant, blind, that I can see nothing, but as a purblind man, what is very near my eye? Are you so out of your wits, that you imagine you can deceive me? Do not all your behaviours speak such a Sentiment to lie secret in your heart, though not form'd into a full conception, yet testified by your Actions? No, you are much mistaken, 'tis impossible but that I should see and know all things, since I am present with all things, and am not at a greater distance from the things on earth, than from the things in Heaven; for I fill all that vast Fabrick which is divided into those two parts of *Heaven* and *Earth*; and he that hath such an infinite essence, cannot be distant, cannot be ignorant, nothing can be far from his eyes, since every thing is so near to his Essence.

So that it is an elegant Expression of the *Omniscience* of God, and a strong Argument for it. He asserts, first the Universality of his Knowledge; but lest they should mistake, and confine his presence only to Heaven; he adds, *That he fills Heaven and Earth.* I do not see things so, as if I were in one place, and the things seen in another, as it is with man; but whatsoever I see, I see not without my self, because every corner of Heaven and Earth is fill'd by me. He that fills all, must needs see and know all.

And indeed, men that question the knowledg of God, would be more convinc'd by the Doctrine of his immediate presence with them. And this seems to be the design and manner of Arguing in this place. Nothing is remote from my knowledg, because nothing is distant from my presence.



*I fill Heaven and Earth*: he doth not say, I am in Heaven and Earth, but I *fill* Heaven and Earth, &c. I say some, with my Knowledge; others, with my Authority, or my Power. But,

1. The word *filling* cannot properly be referred to *the act of understanding* and will. A preference by knowledge is to be granted, but to say such a preference fills a place, is an improper Speech. Knowledge is not enough to constitute a preference.

A man at *London* knows there is such a City as *Paris*, and knows many things in it; can he be concluded therefore to be present in *Paris*, or fill any place there, or be present with the things he knows there? If I know any thing to be distant from me, how can it be present with me? For by knowing it to be distant, I know it not to be present. Besides, *filling* Heaven and Earth, is distinguish'd here from *knowing* or *seeing*. His presence is render'd as an Argument to prove his Knowledge. Now a Proposition, and the proof of that Proposition, are distinct, and not the same.

It cannot be imagin'd, that God should prove *idem per idem*, as we say; for what would be the import of the Speech then? I know all things, I see all things, because I know and see all things\*. The Holy Ghost here accommodates himself to the Capacity of men; because we know that a man sees and knows that which is done, where he is corporally present; so he proves, that God knows all things that are done in the most secret Caverns of the Heart, because he is every where in Heaven and Earth, as light is every where in the air, and air every where in the World. Hence the *Schools* use the term *repletivè* for the presence of God.

2. Nor by *filling* of Heaven and Earth, is meant *his Authority and Power*. It would be improperly said of a King, that in regard of the Government of his Kingdom, is every where by his Authority, that he fills all the Cities and Countrys of his Dominions. [*I, do not I fill??*] That [*I*] notes the Essence of God, as distinguished according to our capacity, from the perfections pertaining to his Essence; and is in reason better referred to the substance of God, than to those things we conceive as Attributes in him. Besides, were it meant only of his Authority or Power, the Argument would not run well. I see all things, because my Authority and Power fills Heaven and Earth. Power doth not always rightly infer knowledg, no, not in a rational agent. Many things in a Kingdom are done by the Authority of the King, that never arrive to the Knowledg of the King. Many things in us are done by the Power of our souls, which yet we have not a distinct Knowledg of in our understandings. There are many motions in sleep, by the virtue of the soul informing the body, that we have not so much as a simple knowledg of in our minds. Knowledge is not rightly infer'd from power, or power from knowledg.

By *filling* Heaven and Earth is meant therefore, *a filling it with his Essence*. No place can be imagin'd, that is deprived of the presence of God; and therefore when the Scripture any where speaks of the *presence* of God, it joyns Heaven and Earth together: He so fills them, that there is **no** place without him. We do not say a vessel is full, so long as there is any space to contain more. Not a part of Heaven, nor a part of Earth, but the whole Heaven, the whole Earth at one and the same time. If he were only in one part of Heaven, or one part of Earth; nay, if there were any part of Heaven, or any part of Earth void of him, he could not be said to fill them. I fill Heaven and Earth; not a part of me fills one place, and another part of me fills another; but I, God, fill Heaven and Earth; I am whole God filling the Heaven; and whole God, filling the Earth. I fill Heaven, and yet fill Earth; I fill Earth, and yet fill Heaven, and fill Heaven and Earth at one and the same time. *God fills his own works*, a *Heathen Philosopher* saith<sup>s</sup>.

Here is then a Description of *Gods Presence.*

1. *By Power*; *Am I not a God afar off?* a God in the extension of his Arm.
2. *By Knowledge*; *Shall I not see them?*
3. *By Essence*; as an undeniable ground for inferring the two former: *I fill Heaven and Earth.*

Does God is Essentially every where present in Heaven and Earth.

If God be, he must be somewhere; that which is no where, is nothing. Since God is, he is in the world; not in one part of it; for then he were circumscrib'd by it: if in the world, and only there, though it be a great space, he were also limited.

\* Some therefore said, God was *every where*, and *no where*. No where, i. e. not bounded

112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 9

\* Shared.

\* Amiral, de  
Trinité, 7.  
57.

\* Seneca de  
Benefic. lib. 4.  
cap. 8. Ipse co-  
pus suum im-  
plet.

\* Chrysothem.



\* Acts. 17. 28.

bounded by any place, nor receiving from any place any thing for his preservation or sustainment. He is every where, because no creature either Body or Spirit, can exclude the presence of his Essence; for he is not only near, but in every thing; \* *In him we live, and move, and have our being.* Not absent from any thing, but so present with them, that they live and move in him, and move more in God, than in the air or earth wherein they are; nearer to us than our flesh to our bones, than the air to our breath; he cannot be far from them that live, and have every motion in him. The *Apostle* doth not say, *By him*, but *in him*, to shew the inwardness of his Presence.

As *Eternity* is the perfection whereby he hath neither beginning nor end; *Immutability* is the perfection whereby he hath neither increase, nor diminution: so *Immensity* or *Omnipresence* is that whereby he hath neither bounds, nor limitation. As he is in all time, yet so as to be above time; so is he in all places, yet so as to be above limitation by any place. It was a good Expression of a *Heathen* to illustrate this, That God is a Sphere or Circle, whose *Center is every where, and Circumference no where.* His meaning was, that the Essence of God was indivisible; i. e. could not be divided. It cannot be said, here and there the lines of it terminate; 'tis like a line drawn out in infinite spaces, that no point can be conceived where its length and breadth ends. The Sea is a vast mass of waters; yet to that it is said, *Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further.* But it cannot be said of Gods Essence, hitherto it reaches and no further; here it is, and there it is not. 'Tis plain, that God is thus *immense*, because he is infinite; we have Reason and Scripture to attest to it, though we cannot conceive it. We know that God is eternal, though Eternity is too great to be measured by the short line of a created understanding. We cannot conceive the Vastness and Glory of the Heavens, much less that which is so great, as to fill Heaven and Earth; yea, \* *not to be contained in the Heaven of Heavens.*

\* 1 King. 8. 27.

Things are said to be present, or in a place.

1. *Circumscriptive*, as circumscribed. This belongs to things that have quantity, as bodies that are encompass'd by that place wherein they are; and a body fills but one particular space wherein it is, and the space is commensurate to every part of it, and every member hath a distinct place. The hand is not in the same particular space, that the foot or head is.

2. *Definitive*, which belongs to Angels and Spirits, which are said to be in a point, yet so as that they cannot be said to be in another at the same time.

3. *Repletive*, filling all places; this belongs only to God: As he is not measured by time, so he is not limited by place. A Body or Spirit, because finite, fills but one space; God, because infinite, fills all, yet so as not to be contained in them, as Wine and Water is in a Vessel. He is from the height of the Heavens to the bottom of the Deep, in every point of the World, and in the whole Circle of it, yet not limited by it, but beyond it.

Now this hath been acknowledged by the wisest in the world.

\* Hierom. on Isa. 66. 1.

\* Hammond on Matth. 6. 7.

\* 1 King. 18. 17.

\* 1 King. 10. 23.

\* Med. Dis-trib. vol. 1. p. 71. 72.

\* Doughty Ant-icc. excurs. 61. 113.

Some indeed had other Notions of God. The more ignorant sort of the *Jews* confin'd him to the Temple\*. And God intimates, that they had such a thought when he asserts his presence in Heaven and Earth, in opposition to the Temple they built as his House, and the place of his Rest\*. And the Idolaters among them, thought their Gods might be at a distance from them, which *Elias* intimates in the scoff he puts upon them\*, *Cry aloud, for he is a God*, meaning *Baal*; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey; and they follow his advice, and cried louder, v. 28. whereby it is evident, they looked not on it as a mock, but as a truth. And the *Syrians* call'd the God of *Israel* the God of the hills, as though his presence were fixed there, and not in the valleys\*; and their own Gods in the Valleys, and not in the Mountains; they phansied every God to have a particular Dominion, and presence in one place, and not in another; and bounded the Territories of their Gods, as they did those of their Princes. \* And some thought him tied to, and shut up in their Temples and Groves wherein they worshipped him\*. Some of them thought God to be confined to Heaven, and therefore sacrificed upon the highest Mountains, that the steam might ascend nearer Heaven, and their Praises be heard better in those places which were nearest to the Habitation of God. But the wiser

Jews



Jews acknowledged it : and therefore call'd God *place*\*, whereby they denoted his *immensity*; he was not contain'd in any place, every part of the World subsists by him : He was a place to himself, greater than any thing made by him. And the wis-  
fer Heathens acknowledged it also.

One calls God a mind passing through the universal nature of things; Another, That he was an infinite and immense Air\*; Another, That it is as natural to think God is every where, as to think that God is: Hence they call'd God the Soul of the World; that as the Soul is in every part of the Body, to quicken it, so is God in every part of the World, to support it.

And there are some resemblances of this in the World, though no Creature can fully resemble God in any one perfection; for then it would not be a Creature, but God. But Air and Light are some weak resemblances of it : Air is in all the spaces of the World, in the Pores of all Bodies, in the Bowels of the Earth, and extends it self from the lowest Earth, to the highest Regions; and the Heavens themselves are probably nothing else but a refin'd kind of Air; and Light diffuseth it self through the whole Air, and every part of it is truly Light, as every part of the Air is truly Air; and though they seem to be mingled together, yet they are distinct things, and not of the same Essence; so is the Essence of God in the whole World, not by diffusion as Air or Light; not mixed with any Creature; but remaining distinct from the Es-  
sence of any Created Being. Now when this hath been own'd by men instructed on-  
ly in the School of Nature, 'tis a greater shame to any acquainted with the Scrip-  
ture to deny it. For the understanding of this, there shall be some Propositions  
premi'd in general.

1. *This is Negatively to be understood.* Our Knowledge of God is most by with-  
drawing from him, or denying to him in our conceptions any weaknesses or imper-  
fections in the Creature. As the infiniteness of God, is a denial of limitation of Be-  
ing, so Immensity or Omnipresence is a denial of limitation of place : And when we  
say, God is *totus* in every place, we must understand it thus, That he is not every  
where by parts, as Bodies are, as Air and Light are; He is every where, *i. e.* his Na-  
ture hath no bounds, he is not tyed to any place, as the Creature is, who when he is  
present in one place, is absent from another. As no place can be without God, so no  
place can compass and contain him.

2. *There is an influential Omnipresence of God.*

1. *Universal with all Creatures.* He is present with all things by his Authority,  
because all things are subject to him : By his power, because all things are sustain-  
ed by him : By his Knowledge, because all things are naked before him. He is pre-  
sent in the World, as a King is in all parts of his Kingdom Regally present : Provi-  
dentially present with all, since his Care extends to the meanest of his Creatures.  
His Power reacheth all, and his Knowledge pierceth all.

As every thing in the World was Created by God, so every thing in the World  
is preserved by God; and since Preservation is not wholly distinct from Creation,  
'tis necessary God should be present with every thing while he preserves it, as well  
as present with it when he Created it. \* *Thou preservest man and Beast.* † *He upholds*  
*all things by the word of his Power.* There is a vertue sustaining every Creature,  
that it may not fall back into that nothing from whence it was elevated by the  
Power of God. All those natural Vertues we call the Principles of Operation, are  
Fountains springing from his Goodness and Power; all things are acted and mana-  
ged by him, as well as preserved by him; and in this sense God is present with all  
Creatures; for whatsoever acts another, is present with that which it acts, by sending  
forth some vertue and influence, whereby it acts : If free Agents do not only *live*,  
but *move in him, and by him*\*, much more are the motions of other natural Agents,  
by a vertue communicated to them, and upheld in them in the time of their acting :  
This virtual presence of God, is evident to our sense, a presence we feel; his *essential*  
presence is evident in our Reason : This *influential* presence may be compar'd to  
that of the Sun, which though at so great a distance from the Earth, is present in the  
Air and Earth by its Light, and within the Earth by its influence in concocting those  
Metals which are in the Bowels of it, without being substantially either of them. God  
is thus so intimate with every Creature, that there is not the least particle of any  
Creature, but the marks of his Power and Goodness are seen in it, and his Goodness

\*  $\text{אין כל}$   
Crot. upon  
Mat. 5. 16.  
Marej. contra  
Volk. lib. 1.  
cap. 27 p. 494  
† Vide Minut.  
Fel. p. 20.  
\* *Ubi in Enead*  
6. lib. 5. cap. 4.

\* Psal. 36. 6.  
† Heb. 1. 3.

\* Acts 17. 28.



doth attend them, and is more swift in its effluence, than the beaming out of Light from the Sun, which yet are more swift than can be declared; but to say he is in the World only by his Vertue, is to acknowledge only the effects of his Power and Wisdom in the World, That his Eye sees all, his Arm supports all, his Goodness nourisheth all, but Himself and his Essence at a distance from them\*; and so the Soul of man according to its measure would have in some kind a more excellent manner of Presence in the body, than God according to the Infiniteness of his Being with his Creatures; for that doth not only communicate Life to the Body, but is actually present with it, and spreads its whole Essence through the Body and every Member of it: All grant, That God is efficaciously in every Creek of the World; but some say he is only substantially in Heaven.

\* Zech.

\* Isa. 45. 2.

† Mat. 7. 22.

In thy name we  
have done ma-  
ny wonderful  
works.

\* Cyprian in

Aquil. Par. 1.

Qu. 8 Artic. 3.

\* Isa. 55. 6.

† John 14. 23.

\* Ezek. 48. 35.

† Psal. 76. 2.

\* Eph. 4. 6.

\* Ficin.

\* Isa. 40. 15.

\* Maximid.

2. *Limited to such Subjects that are capacitated for this or that kind of Presence.* Yet it is an *Omnipresence*, because it is a Presence in all the Subjects capacitated for it; thus there is a *special Providential Presence* of God with some, in assisting them when he sets them on work as his Instruments for some special Service in the World: As with *Cyrus*\*, *I will go before thee*; and with *Nebuchadnezzar*, and *Alexander*, whom he Protected and Directed to execute his Counsels in the World; such a presence *Judas* and others; that shall not enjoy his glorious Presence, had in the *working of Miracles* in the world: Besides\* as there is an *effective Presence*, of God with all Creatures, because he produced them, and preserves them; so there is an *objective Presence* of God with rational Creatures, because he offers himself to them, to be known and loved by them: He is near to Wicked men in the offers of his Grace, \* *call ye upon him while he is near*; Besides, there is a *gracious Presence* of God with his People in whom he dwells, and makes his abode, *as in a Temple* Consecrated to him by the Graces of the Spirit. † *We will come*, i.e. the Father and the Son, *and make our abode with him*. He is present with all by the Presence of his Divinity, but only in his Saints by a Presence of a gracious Efficacy; he walks in the midst of the Golden Candlesticks, and hath Dignified the Congregation of his People with the Title of *Jehovah Shammah*, \* *The Lord is there: In Salem is his Tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion*. As he filled the Tabernacle, so he doth the Church with the Signs of his Presence; this is not the Presence wherewith he fills Heaven and Earth. His Spirit is not bestowed upon all, to reside in their hearts, enlighten their minds, and bedew them with refreshing Comforts: When the Apostle speaks of Gods being *Above all, and through all*; \* *Above all* in his Majesty, *Through all* in his Providence; he doth not appropriate that, as he doth what follows, and *in you all*; in you all by a special Grace; as God was specially present with Christ by the Grace of Union, so he is specially present with his People by the Grace of Regeneration. So there are several manifestations of his Presence; he hath a Presence of Glory in Heaven, whereby he Comforts the Saints; a Presence of Wrath in Hell, whereby he Torments the Damned; in Heaven he is a God spreading his Beams of Light; in Hell, a God distributing his Strokes of Justice; by the one he fills Heaven, by the other he fills Hell; by his Providence and Essence he fills both Heaven and Earth.

3. *There is an Essential Presence of God in the World.* He is not only every where, by his Power upholding the Creatures, by his Wisdom understanding them, but by his Essence containing them. That any thing is essentially present any where, it hath from God; God is therefore much more present every where, for he cannot give that which he hath not.

1. *He is Essentially present in all places* \*. 'Tis as reasonable to think the Essence of God to be every where, as to be always; Immensity is as rational as Eternity; That indivisible Essence which reaches through all times, may as well reach through all places: 'Tis more excellent to be always, than to be every where; for to be always in duration is Intrinsic; to be every where is Extrinsic; If the greater belongs to God, why not the less? As all times are a Moment to his Eternity, so all places are as a Point to his Essence; As he is larger than all time, so he is vaster than all place: The Nations of the World are to him *as the Dust of the Balance, or Drop of a Bucket* \*. The Nations are accounted as the *small Dust*; the Essence of God may well be thought to be present every where with that which is no more than a grain of Dust to him, and in all those Isles, which if put together, are a very little thing in his hand: Therefore saith a Learned Jew\*, If a man were set in the highest



highest Heavens, he would not be nearer to the Essence of God than if he were in the Center of the Earth. Why may not the Presence of God in the World be as noble as that of the Soul in the Body, which is generally granted to be essentially in every part of the body of man, which is but a little World, and animates every Member by its actual presence, though it exerts not the same operation in every part? the World is less to the Creator, than the Body to the Soul; and needs more the Presence of God, than the Body needs the presence of the Soul. That glorious body of the Sun visits every part of the Habitable Earth in 24 hours by its beams; which reaches the Troughs of the lowest Valleys, as well as the Pinacles of the highest Mountains; must we not acknowledg in the Creator of this Sun an infinite greater proportion of Presence? Is it not as easy with the Essence of God to over-spread the whole body of Heaven and Earth, as it is for the Sun to pierce and diffuse its self through the whole Air between it and the Earth, and send up its light also as far to the Regions above? Do we not see something like it in Sounds and Voices? Is not the same Sound of a Trumpet, or any other Musical Instrument, at the first breaking out of a Blast, in several places within such a compass, at the same time? Doth not every Ear that hears it, receive alike the whole sound of it? And fragrant Odors scented in several places at the same time, in the same manner; and the Organ proper for Smelling takes in the same in every person within the compass of it: How far is the noise of Thunder heard alike to every Ear, in places something distant from one another? And do we daily find such a manner of presence in those things of so low a concern, and not imagine a kind of Presence of God greater than all those? Is the sound of Thunder, the *Voice of God*, as it is call'd, every where in such a compass, and shall not the Essence of an Infinite God be much more every where? Those that would confine the Essence of God only to Heaven, and exclude it from the Earth, run into great inconveniencies. It may be demanded, whether he be in one part of the Heavens, or in the whole vast body of them? If in one part of them, his Essence is bounded; if he moves from that part, he is mutable, for he changes a place wherein he was, for another wherein he was not. If he be always fixed in one part of the Heavens, such a notion would render him little better than a living Statue\*: If he be in the whole Heaven, why cannot his Essence possess a greater space than the whole Heavens which are so vast? How comes he to be confin'd within the compass of that, since the whole Heaven compasseth the Earth? If he be in the whole Heaven, he is in places farther distant one from another, than any part of the Earth can be from the Heavens; since the Earth is like a Center in the midst of a Circle, it must be nearer to every part of the Circle, than some parts of the Circle can be to one another: If therefore his Essence possesses the whole Heavens, no reason can be render'd why he doth not also possess the Earth, since also the Earth is but a little *point* in comparison of the vastness of the Heavens; If therefore he be in every part of the Heavens, why not in every part of the Earth?

\* *Hornbeck*  
Soun. Part 1.  
P. 303.

The Scripture is plain†, *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I ascend up to Heaven, thou art there; If I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there; If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall uphold me.* If he be in Heaven, Earth, Hell, Sea, he fills all places with his Presence; his Presence is here asserted in places the most distant from one another; all the places then between Heaven and Earth are possessed by his Presence: 'Tis not meant of his Knowledge, for that the Psalmist had spoken of before, *ver. 2. 3. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off, thou art acquainted with all my ways.* Besides, *Thou art there*, not thy wisdom or knowledge; but *Thou*, thy Essence, not only thy Vertue. For having before spoken of his Omniscience, he proves that such Knowledg could not be in God, unless he were present in his Essence in all places, so as to be excluded from none: He fills the depths of Hell, the extension of the Earth, and the heights of the Heavens. When the Scripture mentions the Power of God only, it expresseth it by Hand or Arm; but when it mentions the Spirit of God, and doth not intend the *Third Person* in the Trinity, it signifies the Nature and Essence of God: And so here, when he saith, *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?* he adds ex-  
getically, *Whither shall I flee from thy Presence, or Heb. Face?* and the Face of  
God

Psal. 139. 7.  
8. 9.



†Exod. 33. 20. 23. God in Scripture signifies the Essence of God; *Then canst not see my face, and my face shall not be seen*; the effects of his Power, Wisdom, Providence, are seen, which are his Back-parts, but not his face: The effects of his Power and Wisdom are seen in the World, but his Essence is invisible; and this the Psalmist elegantly expresseth. Had I Wings endued with as much quickness as the first Dawnings of the morning light, or the first darts of any Sun-beam that spreads its self through the Hemisphere, and passes many Miles in as short a space as I can think a Thought, I should find thy presence in all places before me, and could not lie out of the infinite compass of thy Essence.

2. *He is Essentially present with all Creatures.* If he be in all places, it follows that he is with all Creatures in those places; as he is in Heaven, so he is with all Angels; as he is in Hell, so is he with all Devils; as he is in the Earth and Sea, he is with all Creatures inhabiting those Elements: As his Essential Presence was the ground of the first Being of things by Creation, so it is the ground of the continued Being of things by Conservation. As his Essential Presence was the Original, so it is the support of the existence of all the Creatures. What are all those magnificent expressions of his Creative virtue, but Testimonies of his Essential Presence at the laying the Foundation of the World? *when he measured the Waters in the hollow of his hand, meted out Heaven with the Span, and comprehended the Dust of the Earth in a Measure, and weighed the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Balance.* He sets forth the Power and Majesty of God in the Creation and Preservation of things, and every Expression testifies his Presence with them: The Waters that were upon the face of the Earth at first, were no more than a drop in the palm of a mans hand, which in every part is touched by his hand. And thus he is equally present with the blackest Devils, as well as the brightest Angels; with the lowest Dust, as well as with the most sparkling Sun. He is equally present with the Damned and the Blessed, as he is an Infinite Being, but not in regard of his Goodness and Grace. He is equally present with the Good and the Bad, with the scoffing *Athenians*, as well as the believing Apostles, in regard of his Essence, but not in regard of the breathing of his Divine Vertues upon them to make them like himself: *He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our Being:* The Apostle includes all; he tells them they should seek the Lord; the Lord that they were to seek, is God essentially considered: We are indeed to seek the Perfections of God, that glitter in his works, but to the end that they should direct us to the seeking of God himself in his own Nature and Essence: And therefore what follows, *In him we live*, is to be understood not of his Power and Goodness, perfections of his Nature, distinguished according to our manner of conception, from his Essence; but of the Essential Presence of God with his Creatures. If he had meant it of his efficacy in preserving us, it had not been any proof of his nearness to us. Who would go about to prove the body or substance of the Sun to be near us because it doth warm and enlighten us, when our sense evidenceth the distance of it? We live in the beams of the Sun, but we cannot be said to live in the Sun, which is so far distant from us. The Expression seems to be more emphatical than to intend any less than his Essential Presence: But we live in him not only as the efficient cause of our Life, but as the foundation sustaining our lives and motions, as if he were like Air, diffused round about us. And we move in him, as *Austin* saith, as a Sponge in the Sea, not containing him, but being contained by him: He compasseth all, is encompass'd by none; he fills all, is comprehended by none. The Creator contains the World, the World contains not the Creator: As the hollow of the hand contains the water, the water in the hollow of the hand contains not the hand; and therefore some have chose to say rather, That the World is in God, it lives and moves in him, than that God is in the World: If all things thus live and move in him, then he is present with every thing that hath Life, and Motion; and as long as the Devils and Damned have life, and motion, and being, so long is he with them; for whatsoever lives and moves, lives and moves in him.

But now this Essential Presence is

1. *Without any mixture.* I fill Heaven and Earth; not, I am mixed with Heaven and Earth; his Essence is not mixed with the Creatures; it remains intire in its self. The Sponge retains the nature of a Sponge, though encompass'd by the Sea, and moving



ving in it ; and the Sea still retains its own nature. God is most simple ; his Essence therefore is not mixed with any thing. The Light of the Sun is present with the air, but not mixed with it, it remains light, and the air remains air ; the light of the Sun is diffused through all the Hemisphere, it pierceth all transparent bodies, it seems to mix it self with all things, yet remains unmixed and undivided ; the light remains light, and the air remains air ; the air is not light though it be enlightned. Or, take this similitude ; When many Candles are lighted up in a Room, the light is all together, yet not mixed with one another ; every Candle hath a particular light belonging to it, which may be separated in a moment, by removing one Candle from another ; but if they were mixed, they could not be separated, at least so easily. God is not formally one with the World, or with any Creature in the World by his Presence in it : Nor can any Creature in the World, no, not the Soul of man, or an Angel, come to be Essentially one with God, though God be Essentially present with it.

2. *The Essential Presence is without any division of himself.* I fill Heaven and Earth, not part in Heaven, and part in Earth ; I fill one as well as the other : One part of his Essence is not in one place, and another part of his Essence in another place, he would then be changeable ; for that part of his Essence which were now in this place, he might alter it to another, and place that part of his Essence which were in another place, to this ; but he is undivided every where. As his Eternity is one indivisible point, though in our conception we divide it into past, present and to come. So the whole World is as a point to him, in regard of place as before was said ; 'tis as a small Dust, and grain of Dust : 'Tis impossible that one part of his Essence can be separated from another, for he is not a Body, to have one part separable from another. The light of the Sun cannot be cut into parts, it cannot be shut into any place and kept there, 'tis intire in every place ; shall not God who gives the light that power, be much more present himself ? whatsoever hath parts is finite, but God is infinite, therefore hath no parts of his Essence. Besides, if there were such a Division of his Being, he would not be the most simple and uncompounded Being, but would be made up of various parts ; he would not be a Spirit, for parts are evidences of composition ; and it could not be said that God is here or there, but only a part of God here, and a part of God there. But he fills Heaven and Earth, he is as much a God in the Earth beneath as in Heaven above\* ; intirely in all places, not by scraps and fragments of his Essence.

\* Deut. 4. 39.

3. *This Essential Presence is not by Multiplication.* For that which is infinite cannot multiply it self, or make it self more or greater than it was.

4. *This Essential Presence is not by extension or diffusion.* As a piece of Gold may be beaten out to cover a large compass of ground ; no, if God should Create Millions of Worlds he would be in them all, not by stretching out his Being, but by the Infiniteness of his Being ; not by a new growth of his Being, but by the same Essence he had from Eternity : Upon the same reasons mention'd before, his Simplicity and Indivisibility.

5. *But Totally.* There is no space, not the least, wherein God is not wholly according to his Essence, and wherein his whole Substance doth not exist ; not a part of Heaven can be design'd wherein the Creator is not wholly ; as he is in one part of Heaven, he is in every part of Heaven. Some kind of resemblance we may have from the water of the Sea, which fills the great space of the World, and is diffused through all ; yet the Essence of Water is in every drop of Water in the Sea, as much as the whole ; and the same quality of Water, tho' it comes short in quantity ; and why shall we not allow God a nobler way of Presence without diffusion, as is in that ? Or take this resemblance, since God likens himself to Light in the Scripture \*, he covereth himself with Light ; A Chrystal Globe hung up in the Air hath Light all about it, all within it, every part is pierced by it, wherever you see the Chrystal you see the Light ; the Light in one part of the Chrystal cannot be distinguished from the Light in the other part ; and the whole Essence of Light is in every part ; and shall not God be as much present with his Creatures, as one Creature can be with another\* ? God is totally every where by his own simple substance.

\* Psal 104. 2.  
1 John 1. 5.  
God is Light,  
and in him is no  
darkness at all.

\* Bernard.

Proposition 4. *God is present beyond the World.* He is within and above all pla-



ces, though places should be infinite in number : as he was before and beyond all Time, so he is above and beyond all place ; being from Eternity before any real time, he must also be without as well as within any real space ; if God were only confin'd to the World, he would be no more infinite in his Essence than the World is in quantity ; as a moment cannot be conceived from Eternity, wherein God was not in Being, so a space cannot be conceived in the mind of man, wherein God is not present ; he is not contained in the World nor in the Heavens. \* *But will God indeed dwell on the Earth? Behold the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Thee.* Solomon wonders that God should appoint a Temple to be erected to him upon the Earth, when he is not contained in the vast Circuit of the Heavens ; his Essence is not straitned in the limits of any Created work, he is not contained in the Heavens, i. e. in the manner that he is there ; but he is there in his Essence, and therefore cannot be contain'd there in his Essence. If it should be meant only of his Power and Providence, it would conclude also for his Essence ; if his Power and Providence were infinite, his Essence must be so too ; for the infiniteness of his Essence is the ground of the infiniteness of his Power : It can never enter into any thought, that a finite Essence can have an infinite Power, and that an infinite Power can be without an infinite Essence ; it cannot be meant of his Providence, as if Solomon should say, *the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thy Providence* ; for naming the Heaven of Heavens, that which encircles and bounds the other parts of the World, he could not suppose a Providence to be exercis'd where there was no object to exercise it about ; as no Creature is mention'd to be beyond the uttermost Heaven, which he calls here the Heaven of Heavens : Besides, to understand it of his Providence, doth not consist with Solomon's admiration : He wonders that God, that hath so immense an Essence, should dwell in a Temple made with hands ; he could not so much wonder at his Providence in those things that immediately concern his Worship. Solomon plainly asserts this of God, That he was so far from being bounded within the rich Wall of the Temple, which with so much Cost he had fram'd for the Glory of his Name, that the richer Palace of the Heaven of Heavens could not contain him ; 'tis true, it could not contain his Power and Wisdom, because his Wisdom could contrive other kind of Worlds, and his Power erect them : But doth the meaning of that wise King reach no farther than this? Will the Power and Wisdom of God reside on the Earth? He was too wise to ask such a question, since every object that his eyes met with in the World resolv'd him, That the Wisdom and Power of God dwelt upon the Earth, and glitter'd in every thing he had Created ; and Reason would assure him, That the Power that had fram'd this World, was able to frame many more : But Solomon considering the immensity of Gods Essence, wonders that God should order a House to be built for him, as if he wanted Roofs, and Coverings, and Habitation, as bodily Creatures do. Will God indeed dwell in a Temple, who hath an Essence so immense as not to be contain'd in the Heaven of Heavens? 'tis not the Heaven of Heavens that can contain Him, his Substance. Here he asserts the immensity of his Essence, and his Presence not only in the Heaven, but beyond the Heavens ; he that is not contain'd in the Heavens, as a man is in a Chamber, is without, and above, and beyond the Heavens ; 'tis not said they do not contain him, but it is impossible they should contain him ; they *cannot contain him*. 'Tis impossible then but that he should be above them ; he that is without the compass of the World, is not bounded by the limits of the World ; as his Power is not limited by the things he hath made, but can Create innumerable Worlds, so can his Essence be in innumerable spaces ; for as he hath power enough to make more Worlds, so he hath Essence enough to fill them, and therefore cannot be confin'd to what he hath already Created ; innumerable Worlds cannot be a sufficient place to contain God, he can only be a sufficient place to himself\* ; He that was before the World and place, and all things, was to himself a World, a Place and every thing\* : He is really out of the World in himself, as he was in himself before the Creation of the World : As because God was before the Foundation of the World ; we conclude his Eternity ; so because he is without the bounds of the World, we conclude his Im-  
mensity, and from thence his Omnipresence. The World cannot be said to contain him, since it was Created by him ; it cannot contain him now, who was con-  
tained

\* 1 Kings 8. 27.

\* Petar.

\* Maccor. loc.  
commun. cap.  
19. p. 153.



tained by nothing before the World was: as there was no place to contain him before the World was, there can be no place to contain him since the World was.

God might create more Worlds circular and round as this, and those could not be so contiguous, but some spaces would be left between; as take three round Bills, lay them as close as you can to one another, there will be some spaces between; none would say but God would be in these spaces, as well as in the World he had created, tho' there were nothing real and positive in those spaces: Why should we then exclude God from those imaginary spaces without the World? God might also create many Worlds, and separate them by distances, that they might not touch one another, but be at a great distance from one another; and would not God fill them as well as he doth this? if so, he must also fill the spaces between them: For if he were in all those Worlds, and not in the spaces between those Worlds, his Essence would be divided; there would be gaps in it, his Essence would be cut into parts, and the distance between every part of his Essence would be as great as the space between each World: The Essence of God may be conceived then well enough to be in all those infinite spaces where he can erect new Worlds.

I shall give one place more to prove both these Propositions, viz. That God is Essentially in every part of the World, and Essentially above ours without the World. \* Isa. 66. 1.

\* *The Heaven is my Throne and the Earth is my Foot-stool.* He is Essentially in every part of the World; he is in Heaven and Earth at the same time; as a man is upon his Throne and his Foot-stool. God describes himself in a Human Shape, accommodated to our Capacity; as if he had his Head in Heaven and his Feet on Earth; doth not his Essence then fill all intermediate spaces between Heaven and Earth? as when the head of a man is in the upper part of a Room, and his Feet upon the floor, his body fills up the space between the Head and his Feet; this is meant of the Essence of God, 'tis a Similitude drawn from Kings sitting upon the Throne, and not their Power and Authority, but the Feet of their persons are supported by the Foot-stool; so here it is not meant only of the Perfections of God, but the Essence of God: Besides, God seems to tax them with an erroneous conceit they had, as tho' his Essence were in the Temple, and not in any part of the World; therefore God makes an Opposition between Heaven and Earth, and the Temple; *Where is the House that you built unto me? and where is the place of my Rest?* Had he understood it only of his Providence, it had not been any thing against their mistake; for they granted his Providence to be not only in the Temple, but in all parts of the World? *Where is the House that you Build to me; to Me, not to my Power or Providence, but think to include Me within those Walls.*

Again, It shews God to be above the Heavens, if the Heavens be his Throne; he sits upon them, and is above them as Kings are above the Thrones on which they sit; so it cannot be meant of his Providence, because no Creature being without the Sphere of the Heavens, there is nothing of the Power and the Providence of God visible there; for there is nothing for him to employ his Providence about. For Providence supposeth a Creature in actual being; It must be therefore meant of his Essence, which is above the world, and in the world.

And the like proof you may see, *Job 11. 7, 8. 'Tis as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? the measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea.* Where he intends the unsearchableness of Gods wisdom, but proves it by the infiniteness of his Essence, *Hebr. He is the height of the Heavens*, he is the top of all the Heavens; so that when you have begun at the lowest part, and traced him through all the Creatures, you will find his Essence filling all the Creatures to be at the top of the World, and infinitely beyond it.

5. Fifth Proposition. *This is the property of God, incommunicable to any Creature.* As no Creature can be eternal and immutable, so no Creature can be immense, because it cannot be infinite; nothing can be of an infinite nature, and therefore nothing of an immense Presence but God: It cannot be communicated to the Humane Nature of Christ, tho' in Union with the Divine\*; some indeed argue, that Christ in regard of his humane nature is every where, because he sits at the right hand of God; and the right hand of God is every where: His sitting at the right hand of God signifies his Exaltation, and cannot with any reason be extended to such a kind of arguing; *The Hearts of Kings are in the hand of God;* are the heart

\* River. 119.  
Psal. p. 301.  
Col. 2.



of Kings every where, because Gods hand is every where? The Souls of the Righteous are in the hand of God, is the Soul therefore of every Righteous man every where in the World? The right hand of God is from Eternity, is the Humanity of Christ therefore from Eternity, because it sits at the right hand of God? The right hand of God made the World, did the Humanity of Christ therefore make Heaven and Earth? the Humanity of Christ must then be confounded with his Divinity; be the same with it, not united to it. All Creatures are distinct from their Creator, and cannot inherit the Properties Essential to his Nature; as *Eternity, Immutability, Omnipresence, Omniscience*, no Angel, no Soul, no Creature can be in all places at once; before they can be so, they must be Immense, and so must cease to be Creatures, and commence God; this is impossible.

## II Reasons to prove Gods Essential Presence.

1<sup>st</sup> Reason. *Because he is infinite.* As he is infinite, he is every where; as he is Simple, his whole Essence is every where; for in regard of his Infiniteness, he hath no bounds; in regard of his Simplicity, he hath no parts: And therefore those that deny Gods Omnipresence, tho' they pretend to own him Infinite, must really conceive him Finite.

1. *God is Infinite in his Perfections.* None can set bounds to terminate the greatness and excellency of God \*. *His greatness is unsearchable*, Sept. *ἐκ ὧν ἄρχει* there is no end, no limitation; what hath no end is infinite; his Power is infinite, which doth great things and unsearchable, no end of those things he is able to do; + Job 5. 9. His Wisdom infinite \*. He understands all things past, present, and to come; what is already made, what is possible to be made; his duration infinite \*. *The number of his Years cannot be searched out*, ἀριθμητός. To make a finite thing of nothing, is an Argument of an infinite Vertue; Infinite power can only extract something out of the Barren Womb of nothing, but all things were drawn forth by the Word of God, the Heavens and all the Host of them; the Sun, Moon, Stars, the rich embellishments of the World appear'd in Being, at the Breath of his Mouth \*, the Author therefore must be infinite: And since nothing is the cause of God, or of any Perfection in him; since he derives not his Being, or the least spark of his glorious nature from any thing without him, he cannot be limited in any part of his nature by any thing without him; and indeed the infiniteness of his Power and his other Perfections is asserted by the Prophet, when he tells us that *the Nations are as a Drop of a Bucket, or the Dust of the Ballance, and less than nothing and Vanity* \*, they are all so in regard of his Power, Wisdom, &c. Conceive what a little thing a grain of Dust or Sand is to all the Dust that may be made by the rubbish of a House, what a little thing the heap of the rubbish of a House is to the vast heap of the rubbish of a whole City, such a one as London; how little that also would be to the Dust of a whole Empire; how inconsiderable that also to the Dust of one quarter of the World, Europe or Asia; how much less that still to the Dust of the whole World; the whole World is compos'd of an unconceivable number of Atoms, and the Sea of an unconceivable number of Drops; Now what a little grain of Dust is in comparison of the Dust of the whole World; a Drop of Water from the Sea, to all the Drops remaining in the Sea, That is the whole World to God. Conceive it still less, a meer nothing, yet is it all less than this, in comparison of God; there can be nothing more magnificently expressive of the infiniteness of God to a humane conception, than this expression of God himself in the Prophet.

In the Perfection of a Creature, something still may be thought greater to be added to it; But God containing all Perfections in himself formally, if they be meer Perfections; and eminently, if they be but Perfections in the Creature, mixed with imperfection; nothing can be thought greater, and therefore every one of them is infinite.

2. *If his Perfections be Infinite, his Essence must be so.* How God can have infinite Perfections, and a finite Essence is unconceivable by a Humane or Angelical understanding; an infinite Power, an infinite Wisdom, an infinite Duration, must needs speak an infinite Essence; since the infiniteness of his Attributes is grounded upon the infiniteness of his Essence: To own infinite Perfections in a finite Subject, is contradictory. The manner of Acting by his Power, and Knowing by his Wisdom, cannot



cannot exceed the manner of Being by his Essence. His Perfections flow from his Essence, and the Principle must be of the same rank with what flows from it; and if we conceive his Essence to be the cause of his Perfections; 'tis utterly impossible that an infinite effect should arise from a finite Cause; but indeed his Perfections are his Essence, for tho' we conceive the Essence of God as the subject, and the Attributes of God as faculties and qualities in that Subject according to our weak model, who cannot conceive of an infinite God without some manner of likeness to our selves; who find Understanding, and Will, and Power in us distinct from our Substance; yet truly and really there is no distinction between his Essence and Attributes; one is inseparable from the other; his Power and Wisdom are his Essence; and therefore to maintain God Infinite in the one, and Finite in the other, is to make a Monstrous God, and have an unreasonable notion of the Deity; for there would be the greatest disproportion in his nature, since there is no greater disproportion can possibly be between one thing and another, than there is between finite and infinite: God must not only then be compounded, but have parts of the greatest distance from one another in nature; but God being the most Simple Being without the least composition, both must be equally infinite: If then his Essence be not infinite, his Power and Wisdom cannot be infinite, which is both against Scripture and Reason.

Again, how should his Essence be finite, and his Perfections be infinite; since nothing out of himself gave them either the one or the other?

\* Again, either the Essence can be infinite, or it cannot; if it cannot, there must be some cause of that impossibility; that can be nothing without him; because nothing without him can be as powerful as himself, much less too powerful for him; nothing within him can be an Enemy to his highest Perfection; since he is necessarily what he is, he must be necessarily the most perfect Being, and therefore necessarily infinite; since to be something infinitely, is a greater Perfection than to be something finitely\*; if he can be infinite, he is infinite; otherwise he could be greater than he is, and so more Blessed and more Perfect than he is, which is impossible; for being the most perfect Being, to whom nothing can be added, he must needs be infinite.

+ *Ambrasil de Trinitat p. 89.*

+ *Deus est alius parvus & nullam habet potentiam passivam.*

3. *If therefore God have an Infinite Essence, he hath an infinite Presence.* An infinite Essence cannot be contained in a finite place; as those things which are finite have a bounded space, wherein they are; so that which is infinite hath an unbounded space; for as finiteness speaks limitedness; so infiniteness speaks unboundedness; and if we grant to God an infinite duration, there is no difficulty in acknowledging an infinite Presence: Indeed the infiniteness of God is a property belonging to him in regard of time and place; he is bounded by no place, and limited to no time.

Again, Infinite Essence may as well be every where, as infinite power reach every thing; it may as well be present with every Being, as infinite power in its working may be present with nothing to bring it into Being. Where God works by his Power he is present in his Essence; because his Power and his Essence cannot be separated; and therefore his Power, Wisdom, Goodness, cannot be any where, where his Essence is not: His Essence cannot be sever'd from his Power, nor his Power from his Essence; for the Power of God is nothing but God acting, and the wisdom of God nothing, but God knowing. As the power of God is always, so is his Essence; as the power of God is every where, so is his Essence; whatsoever God is, he is alway, and every where: To confine him to a place, is to measure his Essence; as to confine his actions, is to limit his power; his Essence being no less infinite than his Power and his Wisdom, can be no more bounded than his Power and Wisdom; but they are not separable from his Essence, yea they are his Essence; if God did not fill the whole World, he would be determin'd to some place, and excluded from others; and so his Substance would have bounds and limits, and then something might be conceived greater than God; for we may conceive that a Creature may be made by God of so vast a greatness as to fill the whole World; for the power of God is able to make a body that should take up the whole space between Heaven and Earth, and reach to every corner of it; but nothing can be conceived by any Creature greater than God; he exceeds all things, and

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is exceeded by none ; God therefore cannot be included in Heaven, nor included in the Earth ; cannot be contained in either of them ; for if we should imagine them vaster than they are, yet still they would be finite ; and if his Essence were contain'd in them, it could be no more infinite than the World which contains it ; As water is not of a larger compass than the Vessel which contains it. If the Essence of God were limited either in the Heavens or Earth, it must needs be finite, as the Heaven and Earth are ; But there is no proportion between finite and infinite ; God therefore cannot be contain'd in them : If there were an infinite body, that must be every where ; certainly then an infinite Spirit must be every where : Unless we will account him finite, we can render no reason why he should not be in one Creature as well as in another ; if he be in Heaven, which is his Creature, why can he not be in the Earth, which is as well his Creature as the Heavens.

2. Reason. *Because of the continual operation of God in the World.* This was one reason made the Heathen believe that there was an infinite Spirit in the vast body of the World, acting in every thing, and producing those admirable motions which we see every where in Nature : That cause which acts in the most perfect manner, is also in the most perfect manner present with its effects.

God preserves all, and therefore is in all ; the *Apostle* thought it a good induction \* ; *He is not far from us : for in him we live.* For being as much as *because*, shews that from his operation he concluded his real presence with all : 'Tis not his virtue is not far from every one of us ; but *He*, his Substance, himself ; for none that acknowledge a God, will deny the absence of the virtue of God from any part of the World. He works in every thing, every thing lives and works in him ; therefore he is present with all \* : or rather if things live, they are in God, who gives them life. If things live, God is in them, and gives them life : If things move, God is in them, and gives them motion : If things have any Being, God is in them, and gives them Being ; if God withdraws himself, they presently lose their Being ; and therefore some have compar'd the Creature to the impression of a Seal upon the water, that cannot be preserved but by the *Presence* of the Seal. As his Presence was actual with what he Created, so his Presence is actual with what he preserves, since Creation and Preservation do so little differ ; if God creates things by his Essential Presence, by the same he supports them ; If his substance cannot be disjoyn'd from his preserving Power, his power and wisdom cannot be separated from his Essence ; where there are the marks of the one, there is the presence of the other ; for it is by his Essence that he is powerful and wise ; no man can distinguish the one from the other in a simple Being : God doth not preserve and act things by a virtue diffus'd from him. It may be demanded whether that virtue be distinct from God ? if it be not, 'tis then the Essence of God ; if it be distinct, 'tis a Creature, and then it may be ask't how that virtue which preserves other things, is preserved itself ? it must be ultimately resolv'd into the Essence of God, or else there must be a running in *infinitum* : or else, \* is that virtue of God a substance or not ? Is it endued with understanding or not ? If it hath understanding, how doth it differ from God ? If it wants understanding, can any imagine that the support of the World, the guidance of all Creatures, the wonders of Nature can be wrought, preserv'd, manag'd by a virtue that hath nothing of understanding in it ? If it be not a substance, it can much less be able to produce such excellent Operations, as the preserving all the kinds of things in the World, and ordering them to perform such excellent ends ; this Virtue is therefore God himself, the infinite Power and Wisdom of God ; and therefore wheresoever the effects of these are seen in the World, God is essentially present ; some Creatures indeed act at a distance by a virtue diffus'd ; but such a manner of acting comes from a limitedness of nature, that such a nature cannot be every where present, and extend its substance to all parts ; To act by a virtue, speaks the Subject finite, and it is a part of indigence : Kings act in their Kingdoms by Ministers and Messengers, because they cannot act otherwise ; but God being infinitely perfect, *works all things in all* immediately \* ; Illumination, Sanctification, Grace, &c. are the immediate Works of God in the heart, and immediate Agents are present with what they do ; 'tis an Argument of the greater Perfection of a Being, to know things immediately, which are done in several places, than to know them at the second hand by Instruments : 'tis no less a Per-

Acts 17. 27.

\* Pont.

N.B.

\* Amyrald de  
Trinitat. p. 106.  
107.

1 Cor. 12. 6.



Perfection to be every where, rather than to be tyed to one place of action; and to act in other places by Instruments, for want of a Power to act immediately it self: God indeed acts by means and second causes in his Providential Dispensations in the World, but this is not out of any Defect of Power to Work all immediately himself; but he thereby accommodates his way of acting to the nature of the Creature, and the Order of Things which he hath settled in the World; And when he Works by means, he acts with those means, in those means, sustains their faculties and vertues in them, concurs with them by his Power; so that Gods acting by means, doth rather strengthen his Essential Presence than weaken it; since there is a necessary dependance of the Creatures upon the Creator in their Being and Acting; and what they are, they are by the Power of God; what they act, they act in the Power of God, concurring with them; they have their Motion in him as well as their Being; and where the Power of God is, his Essence is, because they are inseparable; and so this Omnipresence ariseth from the simplicity of the Nature of God; the more vast any thing is, the less confin'd. All that will acknowledge God so great, as to be able to work all things by his Will, without an Essential Presence, cannot imagine him upon the same reason, so little as to be contain'd in, and bounded by any place.

3. Reason. *Because of his Supreme Perfection.*

No Perfection is wanting to God; but an unbounded Essence is a Perfection; a limited one is an Imperfection. Tho' it be a Perfection in a man to be Wise, yet it is an Imperfection that his Wisdom cannot rule all the things that concern him; tho' it be a Perfection to be present in a place where his affairs lye, yet is it his Imperfection that he cannot be present every where, in the midst of all his Concerns; if any man could be so, it would be universally own'd as a prime Perfection in him above others; Is that which would be a Perfection in man, to be deny'd to God\*? as that which hath life, is more perfect than that which hath not life; and that which hath sense is more perfect than that which hath only life, as the Plants have; and what hath reason, is more perfect than that which hath only life and sense, as the Beasts have; so what is every where, is more perfect than that which is bounded in some narrow confines; if a Power of motion be more excellent than to be Bed-ridden; and swiftness in a Creature, be a more excellent endowment than to be slow and Snail like; Then to be every where without motion, is unconceivably a greater excellency than to be every where successively by motion. God sets forth his readiness to help his People and punish his Enemies; or his Omnipresence, by swiftness, or *flying upon the Wings of the Wind*\*: the Wind is in every part of the Air, where it blows; it cannot be said that it is in this or that Point of the Air where you feel it, so as to exclude it from another part of the Air where you are not; it seems to possess all at once.

\* Amvaid de  
Trinitat s. 74.  
75.

Psal 18. 102

If the Divine Essence had any bounds of place, it would be imperfect, as well as if it had bounds of time; where any thing hath limitation, it hath some defect in Being; and therefore if God were confined or concluded, he would be as good as nothing in regard of Infiniteness: Whence should this restraint arise? there is no Power above him to restrain him to a certain space; if so, then he would not be God, but that power which restrained him would be God: Not from his own nature, for the being every where, implies no contradiction to his nature; if his own Nature determin'd him to a certain place, then if he removed from that place, he would act against his Nature; to conceive any such thing of God, is highly absurd. It cannot be thought God should voluntarily impose any such restraint or confinement upon himself; this would be to deny himself a Perfection he might have; if God have not this Perfection, it is either because it is inconsistent with his nature; or, because he cannot have it; or, because he will not. The former cannot be; for if he hath impress'd upon Air and Light a resemblance of his Excellency, to diffuse themselves and fill so vast a space; Is such an Excellency inconsistent with the Creator more than the Creature? whatsoever Perfection the Creature hath, is eminently in God\*. *Understand, O ye brutish among the people; and ye fools when will you be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not know?*

\* Psal 94 2, 9.

By



By the same reason he that hath given such a Power to those Creatures, Air and Light, shall not be much more filling all spaces of the World? 'Tis so clear a Rule, that the *Psalmist* fixes a folly and brutishness upon those that deny it; 'tis not therefore inconsistent with his Nature, it were not then a Perfection, but an Imperfection; but whatsoever is an Excellency in Creatures, cannot in a way of eminency be an Imperfection in God; if it be then a Perfection, and God want it, 'tis because he cannot have it; Where then is his Power? How can he be then the Fountain of his own Being? If he will not, where is his love to his own Nature and Glory? since no Creature would deny that to it self which it can have, and is an Excellency to it; God therefore hath not only a Power or fitness to be every where, but he is actually every where.

4. Reason. *Because of his Immutability.*

If God did not fill all the spaces of Heaven and Earth, but only possess one, yet it must be acknowledg'd that God hath a Power to move himself to another: It were absurd to fix God in a part of the Heavens, like a Star in an Orb, without a power of motion to another place. If he be therefore Essentially in Heaven, may he not be upon the Earth if he please, and transfer his Substance from one place to another? to say he cannot, is to deny him a Perfection which he hath bestow'd upon his Creatures; the Angels his Messengers are sometimes in Heaven, sometimes on the Earth; the Eagles, meaner Creatures, are sometimes in the Air out of Sight, sometimes upon the Earth. If he doth move therefore and recede from one place, and settle in another, doth he not declare himself mutable by changing places? by being where he was not before, and in not being where he was before? He would not fill Heaven and Earth at once, but successively; no man can be said to fill a Room, that moves from one part of a Room to another; if therefore any in their imaginations, stake God to the Heavens, they render him less than his Creatures; If they allow him a power of motion from one place to another, they conceive him changeable; and in either of them they own him no greater than a finite and limited Being; limited to Heaven, if they fix him there; limited to that space to which they imagine him to move.

5. Reason. *Because of his Omnipotency.*

The Almightyness of God is a Notion settled in the minds of all, That God can do whatsoever he pleases, every thing that is not against the purity of his Nature, and doth not imply a contradiction in its self; he can therefore create Millions of Worlds greater than this; and Millions of Heavens greater than this Heaven he hath already Created; if so, he is then in unconceivable spaces beyond this World, for his Essence is not less and narrower than his Power; and his Power is not to be thought of a further extent than his Essence; he cannot be excluded therefore from those vast spaces where his Power may fix those Worlds if he please; if so, 'tis no wonder that he should fill this World; and there is no reason to exclude God from the narrow space of this World, that is not contain'd in infinite spaces beyond the World. God is wheresoever he hath a Power to act, but he hath a power to act every where in the World, every where out of the World; he is therefore every where in the World, every where out of the World. Before this World was made, he had a Power to make it in the space where now it stands; Was he not then unlimitedly where the World now is, before the World received a Being by his powerful Word? Why should he not then be in every part of the World now? Can it be thought that God who was immense before, should after he had Created the World, contract himself to the limits of one of his Creatures, and tie himself to a particular place of his own Creation, and be less after his Creation than he was before?

This might also be prosecuted by an Argument from his *Eternity*. What is eternal in duration, is immense in essence; the same reason which renders him *eternal*, renders him *immense*; That which proves him to be always, will prove him to be every where.

The third thing is, *Propositions for the further clearing this Divine from any exceptions.*

1. This



1. This truth is not weakened by the expressions in Scripture, where God is said to dwell in Heaven, and in the Temple.

1. He is indeed said to sit in heaven\*, and to dwell on high\*; but he is no where said to dwell only in the heavens, as confin'd to them. 'Tis the Court of his Majestical presence, but not the Prison of his Essence. For when we are told, that the heaven is his throne, we are told with the same breath, that the earth is his foot-stool\*. He dwells on high in regard of the excellency of his nature; but he is in all places in regard of the diffusion of his presence. The soul is essentially in all parts of the body, but it doth not exert the same operations in all; the more noble discoveries of it are in the Head and Heart: In the Head, where it exerciseth the chiefest senses for the enriching the understanding. In the Heart, where it vitally resides, and communicates life and motion to the rest of the body. It doth not understand with the foot or toe, tho' it be in all parts of the body it informs. And so God may be said to dwell in Heaven, in regard of the more excellent and majestic representations of himself both to the Creatures that inhabit the place, as Angels and blessed spirits; and also in those marks of his greatness which he hath planted there, those spiritual natures which have a nobler stamp of God upon them, and those excellent bodies, as Sun and Stars, which as so many Tapers light us to behold his glory\*, and astonish the minds of men when they gaze upon them. 'Tis his Court, where he hath the most solemn Worship from his Creatures, all his Courtiers attending there with a pure love, and glowing zeal. He reigns there in a special manner, without any opposition to his government; 'tis therefore call'd his holy dwelling-place\*: The Earth hath not that title, since sin cast a stain, and a ruining curse upon it. The Earth is not his Throne, because his government is oppos'd. But Heaven is none of Satan's precinct, and the Rule of God is uncontradicted by the Inhabitants of it. 'Tis from thence also he hath given the greatest discoveries of himself: Thence he sends the Angels his Messengers, his Son upon Redemption, his Spirit for Sanctification. From Heaven his gifts drop down upon our heads, and his grace upon our hearts\*. From thence the chiefest blessings of Earth descend. The motions of the heavens fatten the earth; and the heavenly bodies are but stewards to the earthly comforts for man by their influence. Heaven is the richest, vastest, most steadfast and majestic part of the visible Creation. 'Tis there where he will at last manifest himself to his people in a full conjunction of grace and glory, and be for ever open to his people in uninterrupted expressions of goodness, and discoveries of his presence, as a reward of their labour and service. And in these respects it may peculiarly be call'd his Throne. And this doth no more hinder his essential presence in all parts of the earth, than it doth his gracious presence in all the hearts of his people. God is in heaven in regard of the manifestation of his glory: in hell by the expressions of his justice: in the earth by the discoveries of his Wisdom, Power, Patience and Compassion: in his people by the monuments of his grace; and in all in regard of his substance.

2. He is said also to dwell in the Ark and Temple. 'Tis called *Psal. 26. 8. The habitation of his house*, and the place where his honour dwells; and to dwell in *Jerusalem* as in his holy Mountain; *The Mountain of the Lord of Hosts*; in regard of publishing his Oracles, answering their prayers, manifesting more of his goodness to the *Israelites*, than to any other Nation in the world, erecting his true Worship among them, which was not settled in any part of the world besides; and his worship is principally intended in that *Psal. 138. 1. The Lord hath chosen Jerusalem*. The Ark is the place where his honour dwells; the worship of God is called the glory of God, *They changed the glory of God into an image made like to corruptible man*\*, i. e. they changed the worship of God into idolatry; and to that also doth the place in *Zechar. 2. 14.* refer.

Now because he is said to dwell in heaven, is he essentially only there? Is he not as essentially in the Temple and Ark, as he is in Heaven, since there are as high expressions of his habitation there, as of his dwelling in heaven? If he dwell only in heaven, how came he to dwell in the Temple? both are asserted in Scripture, one as much as the other. If his dwelling in heaven did not hinder his dwelling in the Ark, it could as little hinder the presence of his essence on the earth. To dwell in heaven, and in one part of the earth at the same time, is all one as to dwell in all parts of heaven, and all parts of earth. If he were in Heaven, and in the Ark



and Temple, it was the same essence in both, tho' not the same kind of manifestation of himself. If by his dwelling in heaven be meant his whole essence, why is it not also to be meant by his dwelling in the Ark? It was not sure part of his essence that was in heaven, and part of his essence that was on earth, his essence would then be divided; and can it be imagined, that he should be in Heaven and the Ark at the same time, and not in the spaces between? Could his essence be split into fragments, and a gap made in it, that two distant spaces should be fill'd by him, and all between be empty of him. So that Gods being said to dwell in Heaven, and in the Temple, is so far from impairing the truth of this doctrine, that it more confirms and evidences it.

2. *Nor do the Expressions of God's coming to us, or departing from us, impair this Doctrine of his Omnipresence.*

God is said to *hide his face* from his People\*; to be *far from the Wicked*; and the Gentiles are said to be *afar off*, viz. from God†; and upon the manifestation of Christ *made near*: These must not be understood of any distance or nearness of his Essence, for that is equally near to all persons and things; but of some other special way and manifestation of his Presence. Thus God is said to be in Believers by Love, as they are in him\*; *He that abides in love, abides in God, and God in him*: He that loves is in the thing beloved; and when two love one another, they are in one another; God is in a Righteous man by a special grace, and *far from the Wicked* in regard of such special Works; and God is said to be in a place by a special manifestation, as when he was in the Bush\*; or manifesting his Glory upon Mount Sinai†; *The Glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai*: God is said to *hide his face*, when he withdraws his comforting Presence, disturbs the repose of our hearts, flasheth Terror into our Consciences, when he puts men under the smart of the Cross, as tho' he had ordered his Mercy utterly to depart from them; or when he doth withdraw his special assisting Providence from us in our affairs; so he departed from *Saul*, when he withdrew his direction and Protection from him in the concerns of his Government\*; *The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul*, i. e. the Spirit of Government. God may be far from us in one respect, and near to us in another; far from us in regard of Comfort, yet near to us in regard of Support, when his Essential Presence continues the same; this is a necessary consequent upon the infiniteness of God, the other is an act of the Will of God; so he was said to forsake Christ, in regard of his obscuring his Glory from his Humane Nature, and inflicting his Wrath; tho' he was near to him in regard of his Grace, and preserved him from contracting any spot in his Sufferings. We do not say the Sun is departed out of the Heavens when it is be-misted; it remains in the same part of the Heavens, passes on its course, tho' its Beams do not reach us by reason of the Bar between us and it: The Soul is in every part of the Body, in regard of its Substance, and constantly in it, tho' it doth not act so spritely and vigorously at one time as at another in one and the same Member, and discover it self so sensibly in its Operation; so all the various effects of God towards the Sons of men, are but divers Operations of one and the same Essence: He is far from us, or near to us, as he is a Judge or a Benefactor; when he comes to Punish, it notes not the approach of his Essence, but the stroke of his Justice; when he comes to Benefit, 'tis not by a new access of his Essence, but an efflux of his Grace; he departs from us when he leaves us to the Frowns of his Justice; he comes to us when he encircles us in the Arms of his Mercy; but he was equally present with us in both dispensations, in regard of his Essence: And likewise God is said to *come down*\*, *And the Lord came down to see the City*; when he doth some signal and wonderful Works which attract the minds of men to the acknowledgment of a Supream Power and Providence in the World, who judg'd God absent and careless before.

3. *Nor is the Essential Presence of God with all Creatures any disparagement to him.* Since it was no disparagement to Create the Heaven and the Earth, 'tis no disparagement to him to fill them; if he were Essentially present with them when he created them, 'tis no dishonour to him to be Essentially present with them, to support them; if it were his Glory to Create them by his Essence, when they were nothing; Can it be his disgrace to be present by his Essence, since they are something, and something good, and very good in his Eye? God saw every thing, and



and behold it was very good; or mighty good; all ordered to declare his Goodness, Wisdom, Power, and to make him adorable to man, and therefore took complacency in them: There is a Harmony in all things, a Combination in them for those glorious Ends for which God Created them; and is it a disgrace for God to be present with his own Harmonious composition? Is it not a Musicians Glory to touch with his fingers the Treble, the least and tenderest string, as well as the strongest and greatest Base? Hath not every thing some Stamp of Gods own Being upon it, since he eminently contains in himself the Perfections of all his Works? whatsoever hath Being, hath a Foot-step of God upon it, who is all Being; every thing in the Earth is his Foot-Stool, having a mark of his Foot upon it; all declare the Being of God, because they had their Being from God; and will God account it any disparagement to him to be present with that which confirms his Being, and the glorious Perfections of his nature to his intelligent Creatures? the meanest things are not without their Vertues, which may boast Gods being the Creator of them; and rank them in the midst of his Works of Wisdom as well as Power. Doth God debase himself to be present by his Essence, with the things he hath made, more than he doth to know them by his Essence? Is not the least thing known by him? How? not by a faculty or act distinct from his Essence; but by his Essence it self: How is any thing disgraceful to the Essential Presence of God, that is not disgraceful to his Knowledge by his Essence? Besides, would God make any thing that should be an invincible reason to him to part with his own infiniteness, by a contraction of his own Essence into a less compass than before? it was Immense before, it had no bounds; and would God make a World that he would be ashamed to be present with, and continue it to the diminution and lessening of himself, rather than annihilate it to avoid the disparagement? This were to impeach the Wisdom of God, and cast a blemish upon his infinite Understanding, that he knows not the consequences of his Work, or is well contented to be impaired in the immensity of his own Essence by it. No man thinks it a dishonour to Light, a most excellent Creature, to be present with a Toad or Serpent; and tho' there be an infinite disproportion between Light, a Creature, and the Father of Lights the Creator: Yet \* God \* *Cassend* being a Spirit, knows how to be with Bodies as if they were not Bodies. And being jealous of his own Honor, would not, could not do any thing that might impair it.

4. *Nor will it follow, That because God is Essentially every where, that every thing is God.* God is not every where by any conjunction, composition or mixture with any thing on Earth; when Light is in every part of a Chrystal Globe, and encircles it close on every side, do they become one? No, the Chrystal remains what it is, and the Light retains its own nature: God is not in us as a part of us, but as an efficient and preserving Cause; 'tis not by his Essential Presence, but his efficacious Presence that he brings any person into a likeness to his own Nature: God is so in his Essence with things, as to be distinct from them as a Cause from the Effect; as a Creator different from the Creature, preserving their Nature, not communicating his own; his Essence touches all, is in conjunction with none; *Finite* and *Infinite* cannot be joyn'd; he is not far from us, therefore near to us; so near that we *live* and *move* in him\*; Nothing is God because it moves in him, any more than a Fish in the Sea, is the Sea, or a part of the Sea, because it moves in it; Doth a man that holds a thing in the hollow of his hand, transform it by that action, and make it like his hand? The Soul and Body are more straitly united, than the Essence of God is by his Presence with any Creature: The Soul is in the Body as a form in matter, and from their Union doth arise a man; yet in this near conjunction, both Body and Soul remain distinct; the Soul is not the Body, nor the Body the Soul; they both have distinct natures and essences; the Body can never be changed into a Soul, nor the Soul into a Body; no more can God into the Creature, or the Creature into God. Fire is in heated Iron in every part of it, so that it seems to be nothing but Fire; yet is not Fire and Iron the same thing. But such a kind of arguing against Gods Omnipresence, that if God were Essentially present, every thing would be God; would exclude him from Heaven as well as from Earth. By the same reason, since they acknowledge God essentially in Heaven, the Heaven where he is, should be chang'd into the nature of God; and

\* Acts 17. 27.

*Amyrald de Trinit. p. 99.*  
100.



by arguing against his Presence in Earth, upon this ground they run such an inconvenience, that they must own him to be no where, and that which is no where is nothing. Doth the Earth become God, because God is Essentially there, any more than the Heavens, where God is acknowledged by all to be Essentially present?

Again, if where God is Essentially, that must be God, then if they place God in a Point of the Heavens, not only that Point must be God, but all the World; because if that point be God, because God is there, then the Point touched by that Point must be God, and so consequently as far as there are any Points touched by one another. We live and move in God, so we live and move in the Air; we are no more God by that, than we are meer Air because we breathe in it, and it enters into all the Pores of our Body: Nay, where there was a straiter Union of the Divine Nature to the Humane in our Saviour, yet the Nature of both was distinct, and the Humanity was not chang'd into the Divinity, nor the Divinity into the Humanity.

5. *Nor doth it follow, that because God is every where, therefore a Creature may be worshipt without Idolatry.* Some of the Heathens who acknowledged Gods Omnipresence, abus'd it to the countenancing Idolatry; because God was resident in every thing, they thought every thing might be Worshipped; and some have us'd it as an Argument against this Doctrine; the best Doctrines may by mens corruption be drawn out into unreasonable and pernicious conclusions. Have you not met with any, That from the Doctrine of Gods Free Mercy, and our Saviours satisfactory Death, have drawn Poyson to feed their Lusts, and consume their Souls? a Poyson compos'd by their own corruption, and not offer'd by those Truths. The Apostle intimates to us, that some did, or at least were ready to be more lavish in sinning, because God was abundant in Grace\*; *Shall we continue in Sin, that Grace may abound?* when he prevents an Objection that he thought might be made by some: But as to this Case; since tho' God be present in every thing, yet every thing retains its nature, distinct from the Nature of God; therefore it is not to have a Worship due to the Excellency of God: As long as any thing remains a Creature, 'tis only to have the respect from us, which is due to it in the rank of Creatures. When a Prince is present with his Guard, or if he should go Arm in Arm with a Peasant, is therefore the Veneration and Honor due to the Prince, to be paid to the Peasant, or any of his Guard? would the Presence of the Prince excuse it, or would it not rather aggravate it? he acknowledged such a person equal to me, by giving him my Rights, even in my Sight. Tho' God dwelt in the Temple, would not the Israelites have been accounted guilty of Idolatry, had they Worshipped the Images of the Cherubims, or the Ark, or the Altar, as objects of Worship, which were erected only as means for his Service? Is there not as much reason to think God was as Essentially present in the Temple, as in Heaven; since the same Expressions are us'd of the one and the other? the Sanctuary is called the *Glorious High Throne*\*; and he is said to *dwell between the Cherubims* †, i.e. the two Cherubims that were at the two ends of the *Mercy Seat*, appointed by God as the two sides of his Throne in the Sanctuary, *Exod. 25. 18.* where he was to *dwell*, ver. 8. and meet and *commune with his people*, ver. 22. Could this excuse *Manasseh's* Idolatry in bringing in a Carved Image into the House of God\*? had it been a good Answer to the Charge, God is present here, and therefore every thing may be Worshipped as God? if he be only Essentially in Heaven, would it not be Idolatry to direct a Worship to the Heavens, or any part of it as a due object, because of the Presence of God there? Though we look up to the Heavens, where we Pray and Worship God, yet Heaven is not the object of Worship, the Soul abstracts God from the Creature.

6. *Nor is God defil'd by being present with those Creatures which seem filthy to us.* Nothing is filthy in the Eye of God as his Creature; he could never else have pronounced all good; whatsoever is filthy to us, yet as it is a Creature, it owes it self to the Power of God: His Essence is no more defil'd by being present with it, than his Power by producing it: No Creature is foul in it self, tho' it may seem so to us: Doth not an Infant lye in a Womb of filthiness and rottenness? yet is not the Power of God present with it, in working it *curiously in the lower parts of the Earth*? are his eyes defil'd by seeing the Substance when it is yet imperfect? or his

Rom. 6. 2. 15  
Shall we Sin,  
because we are  
not under the  
Law but under  
Grace.

\* Jer. 17. 13.  
† Psal 80. 1.

\* Chron. 33. 7.



his hand defiled by writing every Member in his *Book*\*? Have not the vilest and most noisom things, excellent Medicinal Vertues? How are they endued with them? How are those qualities preserved in them? by any thing without God, or no? every Artificer looks with Pleasure upon the work he hath wrought with Art and Skill; can his Essence be defil'd by being present with them, any more than it was in giving them such vertues, and preserving them in them? God measures the Heaven and the Earth with his hand, is his hand defil'd by the evil influences of the Planets, or the Corporeal Impurities of the Earth? nothing can be filthy in the Eye of God but *Sin*, since every thing else owes its Being to him. What may appear deform'd and unworthy to us, is not so to the Creator; he sees Beauty where we see Deformity; finds goodness where we behold what is nauseous to us. All Creatures being the effects of his Power, may be the objects of his Presence; Can any place be more foul than *Hell*, if you take it either for the Hell of the Damned, or for the Grave where there is rottenness? yet there he is\*. When *Satan* appear'd before God, and God spake with him\*, Could God contract any impurity by being present where that filthy Spirit was, more impure than any corporeal, noisom, and defiling thing can be? No, God is purity to himself in the midst of noisomness; a Heaven to himself in the midst of Hell: Who ever heard of a Sun-beam stain'd by shining upon a Quag mire, any more than sweetned by breaking into a Perfum'd Room\*? Tho' the Light shines upon pure and impure things, yet it mixes not its self with either of them; so tho' God be present with Devils and Wicked men, yet without any mixture; he is present with their essence to sustain it and support it; not in their defection, wherein lies their defilement; and which is not a Physical, but a Moral evil; Bodily filth can never touch an incorporeal substance. Spirits are not present with us in the same manner that one body is present with another; bodies can by a touch only, defile bodies; Is the Glory of an Angel stained by being in a Coal-mine? or could the *Angel* that came into the Lions Den, to deliver *Daniel*, be any more disturb'd by the stench of the place, than he could be scratcht by the Paws, or torn by the Teeth of the Beasts? their Spiritual nature secures them against any infection when they are *ministering Spirits* to Persecuted Believers in their nasty Prisons\*. The Soul is straitly united with the Body, but it is not made white or black, by the whiteness or blackness of its habitation; is it infected by the corporeal impurities of the Body, while it continually dwells in a Sea of filthy Pollution? If the Body be cast into a Common-shore, is the Soul defil'd by it? Can a Diseased body derive a Contagion to the Spirit that animates it? Is it not often the purer by Grace, the more the body is infected by nature? *Hezekiah's* Spirit was scarce ever more fervent with God, than when the *Sore*, which some think to be a Plague Sore, was upon him\*; How can any Corporeal filth impair the purity of the Divine Essence? it may as well be said, That God is not present in Battels and Fights for his People\*, because he would not be disturbed by the noise of Canons and clashing of Swords, as that he is not present in the World because of the ill scents: Let us therefore conclude this with the Expression of a Learned man of our own\*; To deny the Omnipresence of God, because of ill scented places, is to measure God rather by the nicety of Sense, than by the sagacity of Reason.

#### IV. USE.

##### I. Of Information.

1. *Christ hath a divine nature.* As Eternity and Immutability, two incommunicable properties of the Divine nature, are ascrib'd to Christ; so also is this of Omnipresence or Immensity\*. No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. Not which was, but which is; He comes from heaven by incarnation, and remains in heaven by his Divinity. He was, while he spake to *Nicodemus*, locally on earth, in regard of his humanity; but in heaven according to his Deity, as well as upon earth in the union of his divine and human nature. He descended upon earth, but he left not heaven; He was in the World before he came in the flesh. \* He was in the world, and the world was made by him. He was in the world, as the light that enlightens every man that comes into the world. In the world as God, before he was in the world as man. He was



was then in the world as man, while he discoursed with *Nicodemus*; yet so, that he was also in heaven as God. No creature but is bounded in place, either circumscribed as body, or determin'd as Spirit to be in one space, so as not to be in another at the same time; to leave a place where they were, and possess a place where they were not. But Christ is so on earth, that at the same time he is in heaven; he is therefore infinite. To be in heaven and earth at the same moment of time, is a property solely belonging to the Deity, wherein no creature can be a partner with him. He was in the world before he came to the world, and *the world was made by him* \*. His coming was not as the coming of Angels, that leave heaven, and begin to be on earth, where they were not before; but such a presence as can be ascribed only to God, who fills heaven and earth. Again, If all things were made by him, then he was present with all things which were made: for where there is a presence of power, there is also a presence of essence; and therefore he is still present: for the right and power of Conservation, follows the power of Creation. And according to this divine nature, he promiseth his presence with his Church. \* *There am I in the midst of them.* And † *I am with you alway, even to the end of the world*, i. e. by his Divinity: for he had before told them, \* that they were not to have him alway with them, i. e. according to his Humanity; but in his Divine nature he is present with, and walks in the midst of the golden Candlesticks. If we understand it of a presence by his spirit in the midst of the Church, doth it invalidate his essential presence? No, he is no less than the Spirit whom he sends; and therefore as little confin'd as the Spirit is, who dwells in every believer: and this may also be inferr'd from Joh. 10. 30. *My father and I are one*; not one by consent, tho' that be included; but one in power: for he speaks not of their consent, but of their joint power in keeping his people. Where there is a Unity of Essence, there is a Unity of Presence.

\* Joh. 1. 10.

\* Mat. 18. 20.

† Mat. 28. 20.

\* Mat. 26. 11.

2. *Here is a confirmation of the spiritual nature of God.* If he were an infinite body, he could not fill heaven and earth, but with the exclusion of all creatures. Two bodies cannot be in the same space; they may be near one another, but not in any of the same points together. A body bounded he hath not, for that would destroy his Immensity; he could not then fill heaven and earth, because a body cannot be at one and the same time in two different spaces; but God doth not fill heaven at one time, and the earth at another, but both at the same time. Besides, a limited body cannot be said to fill the whole earth, but one particular space in the earth at a time. A body may fill the earth with its virtue, as the Sun, but not with its substance. Nothing can be every where with a corporeal weight and mass; but God being infinite, is not tied to any part of the World, but penetrates all, and equally acts by his infinite power in all.

3. *Here is an argument for Providence.* His presence is mention'd in the Text, in order to his government of the affairs of the world. Is he every where, to be unconcern'd with every thing? Before the World had a being, God was present with himself; since the World hath a being, he is present with his creatures, to exercise his Wisdom in the ordering, as he did his Power in the production of them. As the Knowledge of God is not a bare contemplation of a thing, so his Presence is not a bare inspection into a thing. Were it an idle careless Presence, it were a Presence to no purpose, which cannot be imagin'd of God. Infinite Power, Goodness, and Wisdom being every where present with his Essence, are never without their exercise. He never manifests any of his perfections, but the manifestation is full of some indulgence and benefit to his Creatures. It cannot be supposed God should neglect those things, wherewith he is constantly present in a way of efficiency and operation. He is not every where, without acting every where. \* *Wherever his Essence is, there is a power and virtue worthy of God every where dispens'd.* He governs by his presence, what he made by his power; and is present as an Agent with all his works. His Power and Essence are together, to preserve them while he pleases, as his Power and his Essence were together to create them when he saw good to do it. Every creature hath a stamp of God, and his presence is necessary to keep the impression standing upon the creature. As all things are his works, they are the objects of his cares; and the wisdom he employ'd in framing them, will not suffer him to be careless of them. His presence with them, engageth him in

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honour not to be a negligent Governour. His Immensity fits him for government; and where there is a fitness, there is an exercise of government, where there are objects for the exercise of it. He is worthy to have the Universal rule of the World, he can be present in all places of his Empire, there is nothing can be done by any of his subjects, but in his sight. As his *Eternity* renders him King alway, so his *Immensity* renders him King every where. If he were only present in heaven, it might occasion a suspicion that he minded only the things of heaven, and had no concern for things below that vast Body; but if he be present here, his Presence hath a tendency to the government of those things with which he is present. We are all in him as Fish in the Sea; and he bears all creatures in the womb of his Providence, and the arms of his Goodness. 'Tis most certain that his Presence with his people is far from being an idle one; for when he promises to be with them, he adds some special Cordial, as, *I will be with thee, and bless thee.* \* *I am with thee, and I will strengthen thee: I will help thee, I will uphold thee* \*. Infinite goodness will never countenance a negligent Presence.

\* Gen. 26. 3.  
Jer. 15. 20.  
Psa. 41. 10-14.

4. *The Omnipotence of God is infer'd from hence.* If God be present every where, he must needs know what is done every where. 'Tis for this end he proclaims himself a God filling heaven and earth, in the Text. *Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord?* I have heard what the Prophets say, that prophesie lyes in my Name: If I fill heaven and earth, the most secret thing cannot be hid from my sight. An Intelligent Being cannot be every where present, and more intimate in every thing, than it can be in it self; but he must know what is done without, what is thought within. Nothing can be obscure to him, who is in every part of the world, in every part of his creatures. Not a thought can start up but in his sight, who is present in the souls and minds of every thing. How easie is it with him, to whose Essence the world is but a point, to know and observe every thing done in this world, as any of us can know what is done in one point of place where we are present? If Light were an understanding being, it would behold and know every thing done, where it diffuseth it self. God is light (as light in a Chrystal glass, all within it, all without it) and is not ignorant of what is done within and without; no ignorance can be fastned upon him who hath an Universal Presence.

Hence by the way we may take notice of the wonderful Patience of God, who bears with so many provocations; not from a Principle of Ignorance, for he bears with Sins that are committed near him, in his sight, Sins that he sees, and cannot but see.

5. *Hence may be infer'd the Incomprehensibility of God.* He that fills Heaven and Earth, cannot be contain'd in any thing; he fills the Understandings of Men, the Understandings of Angels, but is comprehended by neither; 'tis a rashness to think to find out any bounds of God; there's no measuring of an infinite Being, if it were to be measur'd it were not infinite; but because it is infinite, it is not to be measured. God sits *above the Cherubims* \*, above the fulness, above the brightness, not only of a humane, but a created understanding: Nothing is more present than God, yet nothing more hid; he is Light, and yet obscurity\*; his Perfections are visible, yet unsearchable; We know there is an infinite God, but it surpasseth the compass of our minds; we know there is no Number so great, but another may be added to it; but no man can put it in practice without losing himself in a maze of Figures. What is the reason we comprehend not many, nay most things in the World? partly from the Excellency of the object, and partly from the Imperfection of our understandings. How can we then comprehend God who exceeds all, and is exceeded by none; contains all, and is contained by none; is above our understanding, as well as above our sense? as considered in himself infinite; as consider'd in comparison with our understandings, incomprehensible; who can with his eye measure the breadth, length and depth of the Sea, and at one cast view every dimension of the Heavens: God is greater, and *we cannot know him* \*; he fills the understanding as he fills Heaven and Earth; yet is above the understanding as he is above Heaven and Earth: He is known by Faith, enjoy'd by love, but comprehended by no mind. God is not contain'd in that one Syllable, God; by it we apprehend an excellent and unlimited nature; himself only understands himself, and can unveil himself.

\* Ezek. 10. 1.

\* Κρυπτός  
Dionysius call'd  
God.

Job 35. 26.



6. *How wonderful is God, and how nothing are Creatures!* Ascribe the Greatness to our God\*; He is admirable in the consideration of his Power, in the extent of his understanding, and no less wonderful in the immensity of his Essence; That as *Austin* saith, he is in the World, yet not confin'd to it; he is out of the World, yet not debarr'd from it; he is above the World, yet not elevated by it; he is below the World, yet not deprest by it; he is above all, equall'd by none; he is in all, not because he needs them, but they stand in need of him; this as well as Eternity, makes a vast disproportion between God and the Creature: The Creature is bounded by a little space, and no space is so great as to bound the Creator. By this we may take a prospect of our own nothingness; as in the consideration of Gods Holiness we are minded of our own impurity; and in the thoughts of his Wisdom have a view of our own folly; and in the meditation of his Power, have a sense of our weakness; so his Immensity should make us according to our own nature, appear little in our own eyes. What little, little, little things are we to God? less than an Atom in the Beams of the Sun; poor drops to a God that fills Heaven and Earth, and yet dare we to strut against him, and dash our selves against a Rock? If the consideration of our selves in comparison with others, be apt to puff us up, the consideration of our selves in comparison with God, will be sufficient to pull us down; if we consider him in the greatness of his Essence, there is but little more proportion between him and us, than between being and not being, than between a Drop and the Ocean. How should we never think of God without a Holy Admiration of his Greatness, and a deep sense of our own littleness! and as the Angels cover their faces before him; with what awe should creeping Worms come into his Sight! and since God fills Heaven and Earth with his Presence, we should fill Heaven and Earth with his Glory; for this end he Created Angels to Praise him in Heaven, and men to Worship him on Earth, that the Places he fills with his Presence may be filled with his Praise: We should be swallow'd up in admirations of the Immensity of God, as men are at the first sight of the Sea, when they behold a mass of Waters, without beholding the bounds and immense depth of it.

7. *How much is this Attribute of God forgotten or contemned!* We pretend to believe him to be present every where, and yet many live as if he were present no where.

1. 'Tis commonly forgotten, or not believ'd. All the extravagancies of men may be traced to the forgetfulness of this Attribute, as their Spring. The first Speech \* Gen. 3. 10. Adam spake in Paradise after his fall, testified his unbelief of this\*; *I heard thy Voice in the Garden, and I hid my self*; his ear understood the voice of God, but his mind did not conclude the Presence of God; he thought the Trees could shelter him from him, whose eye was present in the minutest parts of the Earth; he that thought after his Sin, that he could hide himself from the Presence of his Justice, thought before that he could hide himself from the Presence of his Knowledge; and being deceived in the one, he would try what would be the fruit of the other: In both he forgets, if not denies this Attribute; either corrupt notions of God, or a slight belief of what in general men assent unto, gives Birth to every Sin. In all Transgressions there is something of Atheism; either denying the Being of God, or a dash upon some Perfection of God; a not believing his Holiness to hate it, his Truth that threatens, his Justice to punish it, and his Presence to observe it. Tho' God be not afar off in his Essence, he is *afar off in the apprehension of the Sinner*\*. Drevil Nicet. lib. 2. cap. 10. There is no wicked man, but if he be an Atheist, he is a Heretick; and to gratify his Lust, will fancy himself to be out of the Presence of his Judge: His reason tells him, God is present with him, his Lust presseth him to embrace the season of a sensual Pleasure; he will forsake his Reason, and prove a Heretick, that he may be an undisturbed Sinner; and Sins doubly both in the error of his mind, and the vileness of his practice; he will conceit God with those in Job\*, *Vail'd with thick Clouds*, and not able to pierce into the lower World; as if his Presence and Cares were confin'd to Cœlestial things, and the Earth were too low a Sphere for his Essence to reach, at least with any Credit. 'Tis forgotten by good men, when they fear too much the designs of their Enemies; *Fear not, for I am with thee*\*. If the Presence of



of God be enough to strengthen against fear, then the prevailing of fear issues from our forgetfulness of it.

2. This Attribute of Gods Omnipresence is *for the most part contemn'd*. When men will commit that in the presence of God which they would be afraid or ashamed to do before the eye of man. Men do not practice that Modesty before God, as before men. He that would restrain his tongue out of fear of mens eye, will not restrain either tongue or hands out of fear of Gods; What is the language of this, but that God is not present with us, or his presence ought to be of less regard with us, and influence upon us, than that of a creature? \* Ask the *Thief* why he dares to steal? Will he not answer, *No eye sees him?* Ask the *Adulterer* why he strips himself of his Chastity, and invades the Rights of another? Will he not answer, \* *No eye sees me?* He *disguiseth himself* to be unseen by man, but slights the all-seeing eye of God. If only a *man* know them, they are in terror of the shadow of death, they are Planet-struck; but stand unshaken at the presence of God. † Is not this to account God as limited as man, as ignorant, as absenting, as if God were something less than those things which restrains us? 'Tis a debasing God below a creature. If we can forbear sin from an awe of the presence of man, to whom we are equal in regard of Nature; or from the presence of a very mean man, to whom we are superior in regard of condition; and not forbear it because we are within the ken of God; We respect him not only as our inferior, but inferior to the meanest man or child of his Creation, in whose sight we would not commit the like action. 'Tis to represent him as a sleepy, negligent, or careless God; as tho any thing might be concealed from him, *before whom* the least fibres of the heart are anatomiz'd and open, who sees as plainly midnight as noon-day sins. Now this is a high aggravation of sin: To break a Kings Laws in his sight, is more bold than to violate them behind his back; as it was *Haman's* offence when he lay upon *Esters* bed, to force the Queen before the Kings face. The least iniquity receives a high tincture from this. And no sin can be little that is an affront in the face of God, and casting the filth of the creature before the eyes of his holiness. As if a Wife should commit Adultery before her Husbands face, or a Slave dishonour his Master, and disobey his commands in his presence. And hath it not often been thus with us? Have we not been disloyal to God in his sight, before his eyes, those pure eyes that cannot behold iniquity without anger and grief? \* *Ye did evil before my eyes. Na than* chargeth this home upon *David*. \* *Thou hast despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight.* And *David* in his repentance, reflects upon himself for it, \* *Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.* I observed not thy presence, I neglected thee while thy eye was upon me. And this consideration should sting our hearts in all our confessions of our Crimes. Men will be afraid of the presence of others, whatsoever they think in their heart. How unworthily do we deal with God, in not giving him so much as an eye-service, which we do man?

8. How terrible should the thoughts of this Attribute be to sinners! How foolish is it, to imagine any hiding-place from the Incomprehensible God, who fills and contains all things, and is present in every point of the World! When men have shut the door, and made all darkness within, to meditate or commit a Crime, they cannot in the most intricate recesses be sheltered from the presence of God. If they could separate themselves from their own shadows, they could not avoid his company, or be obscured from his sight. \* Hypocrites cannot disguise their sentiments from him, he is in the most secret nook of their hearts. No thought is hid, no lust is secret, but the eye of God beholds this, and that, and the other. He is present with our heart when we imagine, with our hands when we act. We may exclude the Sun from peeping into our solitudes, but not the eyes of God from beholding our actions. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and good* \* He lies in the depths of our souls, and sees afar off our designs before we have conceived them. He is in the greatest darkness, as well as the clearest light; in the closest thought of the mind, as well as the openest expressions. Nothing can be hid from him, no not in the darkest Cells, or thickest Walls. *He compasseth our path where we are,* \* and *is acquainted with all our ways.* He is as much present with wicked men to observe their sins, as he is to detest them. Where he is present in his Silence,

*Drexel. Nices.*  
lib. 2. cap. 10.

*Job 24. 15.*

*Job 24. 17.*

*Heb 4 13.*

*1Sa 15. 22.*

*2 Sam. 12. 9.*

*Psal. 51. 4.*

*Quo fugis En-*  
*celade quas*  
*cunq; accesseris*  
*oras, sub Jove*  
*semper eris.*

*Psal 139. 12.*  
*The darkness*  
*and light are*  
*both alike to*  
*him.*

*Prov. 15. 2.*

*Psal 139 3.*



Psal. 139. 8,  
9, 10.

he is present in his Attributes: His Holiness to hate, and his Justice to punish, if he please to speak the word. 'Tis strange men should not be mindful of this, when their very sins themselves might put them in mind of his presence. Whence ha<sup>st</sup> thou the power to act? who preserves thy being, whereby thou art capable of committing that evil? Is it not his Essential presence that sustains us, and his Arm that supports us? And where can any man fly from his presence? Not the vast Regions of Heaven could shelter a sinning Angel from his eye: How was Adam ferreted out of his hiding-places in Paradise? Nor can we find the depths of the Sea a sufficient covering to us. If we were with *Jonah* closeted up in the belly of a Whale; if we had the wings of the morning, as quick a motion as the light at the dawning of the day, that doth in an instant surprise and overpower the regions of darkness; and could pass to the utmost parts of the earth or hell, there we should find him, there his eye would be upon us, there would his hand lay hold of us, and lead us as a Conqueror triumphing over a captive †. Nay, if we could leap out of the compass of heaven and earth, we should find as little reserves from him. He is without the World in those infinite spaces which the mind of man can imagine. In regard of his Immenfity, nothing in being can be distant from him, wheresoever it is.

2d. Use is for Comfort. That God is present every where, is as much a Comfort to a good man, as it is a Terror to a wicked one. He is every where for his people, not only by a necessary perfection of his nature, but an immense diffusion of his goodness. He is in all creatures as their preserver, in the damned as their terror, in his people as their Protector. He fills hell with his severity, heaven with his glory, his people with his grace. He is with his people as light in darkness, a fountain in a garden, as Manna in the Ark. God is in the World as a spring of preservation, in the Church as his Cabinet, a spring of grace and consolation. A man is present sometimes in his field, but more delightfully in his garden. A Vineyard, as it hath more of cost, so more of care, and a watchful presence of the Owner. Isa. 27.3. *I the Lord do keep it, viz. his Vineyard; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* As there is a presence of Essence, which is natural; so there is a presence of Grace, which is federal; A presence by Covenant, *I will not leave thee, I will be with thee*; this later depends upon the former; for take away the Immenfity of God, and you leave no foundation for his universal gracious presence with his people in all their emergencies, in all their hearts. And therefore where he is present in his essence, he cannot be absent in his grace from them that fear him. 'Tis from his filling heaven and earth he proves his knowledg of the designs of the false prophets; and from the same Topick may as well be infer'd the employment of his power and grace for his people.

2 Cor. 12. 7, 9.

1. The Omnipresence of God is a comfort in all violent temptations. No fiery dart can be so present with us, as God is present both with that and the marks-man. The most raging Devils cannot be so near us, as God is to us and them. He is present with his people to relieve them, and present with the Devil to manage him to his own holy purposes: So he was with *Job*, defeating his enemies, and bringing him triumphantly out of those pressing trials. This presence is such a terror, that whatsoever the Devil can despoil us of, he must leave this untoucht. He might scratch the Apostle with a thorn, but he could not rattle him of the presence of divine grace, which God promised him. He must prevail so far as to make God cease to be God, before he can make him to be distant from us: and while this cannot be, the Devils and men can no more hinder the emanations of God to the Soul, than a Child can cut off the Rays of the Sun from imbellishing the Earth; 'tis no mean support for a good man, at any time buffeted by a Messenger of Satan, to think God stands near him and beholds how ill he is us'd. It would be a satisfaction to a Kings favourite in the midst of the Violence some Enemies might use to him upon a Surprise, to understand that the King who loves him, stands behind a Curtain, and through a hole sees the injuries he suffers; and were the Devil as considering as he is malicious, he could not but be in great fear at Gods being in the Generation of the Righteous, as his Serpentine Seed is \*: *There were they in great fear, for God is in the generation of the Righteous.*

Prov. 3. 6.

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2. The Omnipresence of God is a *comfort in sharp Afflictions*. Good men have a Comfort in this Presence in their nasty Prisons, oppressing Tribunals; in the overflowing *Waters* or scorching *Flames*, *he is still with them* \*; and many times by his Presence keeps the *Bush* from Consuming, when it seems to be all in a Flame: In afflictions God shews himself most present, when Friends are most absent; *When my Father and Mother forsake me, then the Lord shall take me up* \*, then God will stoop and gather me into his Protection; or, *Hebr. shall gather me*, alluding to those Tribes that were to bring up the Rear in the *Israelites* March, to take care that none were left behind, and expos'd to Famine or wild Beasts, by reason of some Disease that disenabled them to keep pace with their Brethren; He that is the Sanctuary of his People in all Calamities, is more present with them to support them, than their Adversaries can be present with them to afflict them \*, *A present help in the time of Trouble*; He is present with all things for this end; tho' his Presence be a necessary Presence; in regard of the Immenity of his Nature; yet the end of this Presence, in regard that it is for the good of his People, is a voluntary Presence. 'Tis for the good of man he is present in the lower World, and principally for the good of his People, for whose sake he keeps up the World \*; *His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him*. If he doth not deliver good men from Afflictions, he will be so present as to manage them in them, as that his Glory shall issue from them, and their Grace be brightned by them \*.

What a man was *Paul* when he was lodg'd in a Prison, or dragged to the Courts of Judicature, when he was torn with Rods, or laden with Chains! then did he shew the greatest Miracles, made the Judge Tremble upon the Bench, and brake the Heart, tho' not the Prison of the Jaylor; so powerful is the Presence of God in the pressures of his People. This Presence outweighs all other Comforts, and is more valuable to a Christian than Barns of *Corn*, or *Cellars of Wine* can be to a Covetous man \*: It was this Presence was *David's* Cordial in the mutinying of his Soldiers \*. What a Comfort is this in Exile, or a forced desertion of our Habitations! Good men may be Banish'd from their Country, but never from the Presence of their Protector; Ye cannot say of any corner of the Earth, or of any Dungeon in a Prison, God is not here; if you were cast out of your Country 1000 Miles off, you are not out of Gods Precinct; his Arm is there to cherish the good as well as to drag out the wicked; 'tis the same God, the same Presence in every Country, as well as the same Sun, Moon and Stars; and were not God every where, yet he could not be meaner than his Creature, the Sun in the Firmament, which visits every part of the habitable World in 24 hours.

2. The Omnipresence of God is a *Comfort in all Duties of Worship*. He is present to observe, and present to accept our Petitions, and answer our Suits. Good men have not only the Essential Presence, which is common to all, but his gracious presence; not only the presence that flows from his nature, but that which flows from his Promise; his Essential Presence makes no difference between this and that man in regard of Spirituals, without this in conjunction with it; his nature is the cause of the Presence of his Essence; his Will engag'd by his Truth, is the cause of the Presence of his Grace. He promis'd to meet the *Israelites* in the place where he should set his name, and in all places where he doth Record it \*. *In all places where I Record my Name, I will come unto thee, and I will Bless thee*; in every place where I shall manifest the special Presence of my Divinity. In all places, hands may be lifted up, without doubting of his ability to hear; he dwells in the contrite Hearts, wherever it is most in the exercise of contrition; which is usually in times of special Worship \*, and that to revive and refresh them. Habitation notes a special Presence; tho' he dwell in the highest Heavens in the sparklings of his Glory, he dwells also in the lowest Hearts in the beams of his Grace; as none can expel him from his Dwelling in Heaven; so none can reject him from his residence in the heart. The *Tabernacle* had his peculiar Presence fixed to it \*; his Soul should not abhor them as they are washed by Christ, tho' they are loathsom by Sin: In a greater dispensation there cannot be a less Presence, since the Church under the New Testament, is called the Temple of the Lord, wherein he will both dwell and walk\*; Or, *I will indwell in them*; as if he should say, I will dwell



Zech. 2. 5.

Hag. 2. 3. 4.

Exod. 4. 12.

Math. 28. 20.

in and in them; I will dwell in them by Grace, and walk in them by exciting their Graces; he will be more intimate with them than their own Souls, and converse with them as the Living God, *i. e.* as a God that hath Life in himself, and Life to convey to them in their Converse with him; and shew his Spiritual Glory among them in a greater measure than in the Temple; since that was but a heap of Stones, and the figure of the Christian Church, the mystical Body of his Son. His presence is not less in the Substance than it was in the Shadow; this Presence of God in his Ordinances, is the Glory of a Church; as the Presence of a King is the Glory of a Court; the Defence of it too, as a *Wall of Fire*\*; alluding to the Fire Travellers in a Wilderness made to fright away wild Beasts. 'Tis not the meaness of the place of Worship can exclude him; the second Temple was not so magnificent as the first of Solomon's Erecting; and the Jews seem to despond of so glorious a Presence of God in the second, as they had in the first; because they thought it not so good for the entertainment of him that inhabits Eternity; but God comforts them against this conceit again and again\*; *Be strong, Be strong, Be strong, I am with you*; the meaness of the place shall not hinder the grandeur of my Presence; no matter what the Room is, so it be the Presence-Chamber of the King, wherein he will favour our Suits; he can every where slide into our Souls with a perpetual sweetness, since he is every where, and so intimate with every one that fears him: If we should see God on Earth in his amiableness, as *Moses* did, should we not be encouraged by his Presence, to present our Requests to him, to *Eccho* out our Praises of him? and have we not as great a ground now to do it, since he is as really present with us, as if he were visible to us? he is in the same room with us, as near to us as our Souls to our Bodies; not a word but he hears, not a motion but he sees, not a breath but he perceives; he is through all; he is in all.

4. The Omnipresence of God is a *comfort in all special Services*. God never puts any upon a hard task, but he makes Promises to encourage them and assist them; and the matter of the Promise is that of his Presence; so he did assure the Prophets of Old when he set them difficult tasks; and strengthened *Moses* against the Face of *Pharaoh*, by assuring him *he would be with his Mouth*\*; and when Christ put his *Apostles* upon a Contest with the whole World, to Preach a Gospel that would be Foolishness to the *Greeks*, and a stumbling Block to the *Jews*; he gives them a Cordial only compos'd of his Presence\*, *I will be with you*; 'tis this presence scatters by its Light the darkness of our Spirits; 'Tis this that is the cause of what is done for his Glory in the World; 'tis this that mingles its self with all that is done for his Honour; 'tis this from whence springs all the assistance of his Creatures, markt out for special purposes.

5. *This Presence is not without the special Presence of all his Attributes*. Where his Essence is, his Perfections are; because they are one with his Essence; yea, they are his Essence, tho' they have their several degrees of manifestation. As in the Covenant, he makes over himself as our God, not a part of himself, but his whole Deity; so in promising of his Presence, he means not a part of it but the whole, the Presence of all the Excellencies of his nature to be manifested for our good. 'Tis not a piece of God is here, and another parcel there; but God in his whole Essence and Perfections; in his Wisdom to guide us, his Power to protect and support us, his Mercy to pity us, his Fulness to refresh us, and his Goodness to relieve us: He is ready to sparkle out in this or that Perfection, as the necessities of his People require, and his own Wisdom directs for his own Honour: So that being not far from us in any excellency of his nature, we can quickly have recourse to him upon any emergency; so that if we are miserable, we have the presence of his Goodness; if we want direction, we have the presence of his Wisdom; if we are weak, we have the presence of his Power; and should we not rejoyce in it, as a man doth in the Presence of a Powerful, Wealthy and Compassionate Friend?

### 3. USE of Exhortation.

1. *Let us be much in the actual Thoughts of his Truth*. How should we enrich our understandings with the knowledge of the Excellency of God, whereof this is none of the least; nor hath less of Honey in its Bowels, tho' it be more Terrible



to the Wicked than the Presence of a Lyon; 'tis this that makes all other excellencies of the Divine Nature sweet: What would Grace, Wildom, Power signify at a distance from us? Let us frame in our minds a strong *Idea* of it; 'tis this makes so great a difference between the actions of one man and another; one maintains actual thoughts of it, another doth not; tho' all believe it as a Perfection pertaining to the infiniteness of his Essence. *David*, or rather a greater than *David*, had God *always before him*; there was no time, no occasion wherein he did not stir up some lively thoughts of him\*. Let us have right notions of it; imagine not God as a great King, sitting only in his Majesty in Heaven; acting all by his Servants and Ministers. This, saith *one*,\* is a Childish and unworthy conceit of God, and may in time bring such a conceiver by degrees to deny his Providence; the denial of this Perfection is an Axe at the Root of Religion; if it be not deeply imprinted in the mind, personal Religion grows faint and feeble; who would fear that God that is not imagin'd to be a Witness of his actions? Who would worship a God at a distance both from the Worship and Worshipper\*? Let us believe this Truth, but not with an idle Faith, as if we did not believe it; Let us know, that as wheresoever the Fish moves, it is in the Water; wheresoever the Bird moves, it is in the Air; so wheresoever we move, we are in God: as there is not a moment but we are under his Mercy; so there is not a moment that we are out of his Presence: Let us therefore look upon nothing, without thinking who stands by, without reflecting upon him in whom it Lives, Moves, and hath its Being. When you view a man, you fix your eyes upon his Body, but your mind upon that invisible part that acts every member by life and motion, and makes them fit for your converse. Let us not bound our thoughts to the Creatures we see, but pierce through the Creature to that boundless God we do not see; we have continual remembrancers of his Presence, the Light whereby we see, and the Air whereby we live, give us perpetual notices of it, and some weak resemblance; why should we forget it? yea, what a shame is our unmindfulness of it, when every cast of our Eye, every motion of our Lungs, jogs us to remember it? Light is in every part of the Air, in every part of the World, yet not mixt with any, both remain entire in their own substance. Let us not be worse than some of the Heathens, who pressed this notion upon themselves for the spiriting their actions with Vertue, *That all places were full of God*: This was the means *Basil* used to prescribe, upon a Question was askt him, How shall we do to be serious? *Mind Gods Presence*. How shall we avoid distractions in Service? *Think of Gods Presence*. How shall we resist Temptations? Oppose to them the Presence of God.

1. *This will be a Shield against all Temptations*. God is present, is enough to blunt the Weapons of Hell; this will secure us from a ready compliance with any base and vile attractives, and curb that head-strong Principle in our nature, that would joyn hands with them; the Thoughts of this would, like the powerful Presence of God with the *Israelites*, take off the Wheels from the Chariots of our sensitive Appetites, and make them perhaps, more slower, at least towards a Temptation. How did *Peter* sling off the Temptation which had worsted him, upon a look from Christ? the actuated faith of this would stifle the Darts of Satan; and fire us with an anger against his solicitations, as strong as the Fire that inflames the Darts. *Moses his Sight of him that was Invisible*, strengthened him against the costly Pleasures and Luxuries of a Princes Court\*: We are utterly senseless of a Deity, if we are not moved with this *Item* from our Consciences, *God is Present*. Had our first Parents actually consider'd the nearness of God to them, when they were Tempted to Eat of the Forbidden Fruit, they had not probably so easily been overcome by the Temptation: What Soldier would be so base as to revolt under the Eye of a tender and obliging General? Or what man so negligent of himself, as to Rob a House in the Sight of a Judge? Let us consider, That God is as near to observe us, as the Devil to sollicite us, yea nearer; the Devil stands by us, but God is in us; we may have a Thought the Devil knows not, but not a Thought but God is actually present with, as our Souls are with the Thoughts they think; nor can any Creature attract our heart, if our minds were fixed on that invisible Presence that contributes to that excellency, and sustains it, and considered that no Creature could be so present with us as the Creator is.



2. *It will be a Spur to Holy Actions.* What man would do an unworthy action, or speak an unhandfom Word in the Presence of his Prince? the Eye of the General inflames the Spirit of a Soldier. Why did *David keep Gods Testimonies* \* & because he consider'd that *all his ways were before him*; because he was perswaded his ways were present with God, Gods Precepts should be present with him. The same was the cause of *Jobs Integrity* † *Doth he not see my ways* & to have God in our Eye is the way to be sincere\*; *walk before me* as in my Sight, *and be thou perfect*. Communion with God consists chiefly in an ordering our Ways as in the Presence of him that is Invisible. This would make us spiritual, rais'd and watchful in all our Passions, if we consider'd that God is present with us in our Shops, in our Chambers, in our Walks, and in our Meetings, as present with us as with the Angels in Heaven; who tho' they have a Presence of Glory above us, yet have not a greater measure of his Essential Presence than we have: What an awe had *Jacob* upon him when he consider'd God was present in *Bethel*\*! If God should appear visibly to us when we were alone, should we not be reverent and serious before him? God is every where about us, he doth encompass us with his Presence; should not Gods seeing us, have the same influence upon us, as our seeing God? He is not more essentially present if he should so manifest himself to us, than when he doth not; Who would appear besmear'd in the presence of a great person? or not be asham'd to be found in his Chamber in a nasty posture, by some visitant? Would not a man blush to be catch'd about some mean action, tho' it were not an immoral Crime? If this Truth were impress'd upon our Spirits, we should more blush to have our Souls daub'd with some loathsom Lust, swarms of Sin, like *Egyptian Lice* and *Frogs*, creeping about our Heart in his Sight. If the most sensual man be asham'd to do a dishonest action in the sight of a grave and holy man, one of great reputation for Wisdom and Integrity; how much more should we lift up our selves in the ways of God, who is Infinite and Immenfe, is every where, and infinitely superior to man, and more to be regarded! We could not seriously think of his Presence, but there would pass some intercourse between us; we should be putting up some Petition upon the sense of our Indigence; or sending up our Praises to him upon the sense of his Bounty. The actual thoughts of the Presence of God is the Life and Spirit of all Religion; we could not have sluggish Spirits, and a careless Watch, if we consider'd that his Eye is upon us all the day.

3. *It will quell Distractions in Worship.* The actual thoughts of this would establish our thoughts, and pull them back when they begin to rove; The mind could not boldly give God the slip, if it had lively thoughts of it; the consideration of this would blow off all the Froth that lies on the top of our Spirits. An eye taken up with the presence of one object, is not at leisure to be fill'd with another: He that looks intently upon the Sun, shall have nothing for a while but the Sun in his Eye. Oppose to every intruding Thought the *Idea* of the Divine Omnipresence, and put it to silence by the awe of his Majesty. When the Master is present, Scholars mind their Books, keep their Places, and run not over the Forms to play with one another; The Masters Eye keeps an idle Servant to his Work, that otherwise would be gazing at every Straw, and prating to every Passenger. How soon would the remembrance of this, dash all extravagant fancies out of Countenance, just as the News of the approach of a Prince would make the Courtiers bustle up themselves, huddle up their vain sports, and prepare themselves for a Reverent Behaviour in his sight. We should not dare to give God a piece of our heart, when we apprehended him present with the whole; we should not dare to mock one that we knew were more inwards with us than we are with our selves, and that beheld every motion of our mind, as well as action of our body.

2. *Let us endeavour for the more special and influential Presence of God.* Let the Essential Presence of God be the ground of our Awe, and his gracious influential Presence the Object of our Desire. The *Heathen* thought themselves secure if they had their little petty Household-Gods with them in their Journeys; such seem to be the Images *Rachel* stole from her Father\* to company her Travel with their Blessings; she might not at that time have cast off all respect to those Idols, in the acknowledgment of which she had been Educated from her Infancy; and they seem to be kept by her, till God called *Jacob* to *Bethel*, after the Rape of *Dinah*\*,  
when



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## *A Discourse upon Gods Omnipresence.*

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when *Jacob* called for the strange Gods, and hid them under the Oak. The  
cious Presence of God we should look after in our actions; as Travellers that  
a Charge of Money or Jewels, desire to keep themselves in Company that may pro-  
tect them from High-way men that would rifle them. Since we have the concerns  
of the Eternal Happiness of our Souls upon our hands, we should endeavour to  
have Gods Merciful and Powerful Presence with us in all our ways\*; *In all thy* Psal. 14  
*ways acknowledg him, and he shall direct thy Paths*; acknowledg him before any  
action, by imploring; acknowledg him after, by rendring him the Glory; acknow-  
ledg his Presence before Worship, in Worship, after Worship: 'Tis this Presence  
makes a kind of Heaven upon Earth, causeth affliction to put off the nature of mi-  
sery. How much will the Presence of the Sun out-shine the Stars of lesser Com-  
forts, and fully answer the want of them! The Ark of God going before us, can  
only make all things successful: It was this led the *Israelites* over *Jordan*, and set-  
led them in *Canaan*. Without this we signify nothing, tho' we live without this,  
we cannot be distinguisht for ever from *Devils*; his Essential Presence they have,  
and if we have no more we shall be no better. 'Tis the enlivening, fructifying pre-  
sence of the Sun, that revives the languishing Earth; and this only can repair our  
ruin'd Soul. Let it be therefore our desire, That as he fills Heaven and Earth by his  
Essence, he may fill our Understandings and Wills by his Grace; that we may have  
another kind of Presence with us, than Animals have in their brutish state, or De-  
vils in their Chains: His Essential Presence maintains our Beings, but his gracious  
Presence confers and continues a Happiness.

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INFINITE



# A DISCOURSE

UPON

## Gods Knowledg.

Psal. 147. 5.

*Great is our Lord, and of great Power : his Understanding is Infinite.*

**T**IS uncertain who was the *Author* of this *Psalms*, and when it was Penn'd; some think after the return from the *Babylonish* Captivity: 'Tis a Psalm of Praise, and is made up of matter of Praise from the beginning to the end; Gods benefits to the Church, his Providence over his Creatures; the Essential excellency of his Nature.

The Psalmist doubles his Exhortation to Praise God, v. 1. *Praise ye the Lord, sing Praise to our God*; to praise him from his Dominion as *Lord*, from his Grace and Mercy as *our God*; from the Excellency of the Duty it self, *'tis good, 'tis comely*: some read it *comely*, some *lovely* or *desirable*, from the various derivation of the Word.

*Nothing doth so much delight a gracious Soul, as an opportunity of Celebrating the Perfections and Goodness of the Creator.*

The highest Duties a Creature can render to the Creator are pleasant and delightful in themselves, *'tis comely*. Praise is a Duty that affects the whole Soul.

The Praise of God is a decent thing; the Excellency of Gods nature deserves it, and the Benefits of Gods grace requires it.

'Tis comely when done as it ought to be, with the Heart as well as with the Voice: a Sinner Sings ill tho' his Voice be good; the Soul in it is to be elevated above Earthly things.

The first matter of Praise, is Gods erecting and preserving his Church, v. 2. *The Lord doth build up Jerusalem, he gathers together the out-casts of Israel*: The Walls of demolish'd Jerusalem are now re-edified; God hath brought back the Captivity of Jacob, and reduced his People from their *Babylonish* Exile, and those that were dispers'd into strange Regions, he hath restor'd to their Habitations. Or it may be Prophe-tick of the calling of the Gentiles, and the gathering the out-casts of the Spiritual Israel, that were before as without God in the World, and strangers to the Cove-nant of Promise. Let God be praised, but especially for Building up his Church, and gathering the *Gentiles*, before counted as *out-casts*\*; he gathers them in this World to the Faith, and hereafter to Glory.

*Obs. 1. From the two first Verses observe.*

1. *All People are under Gods Care: but he has a particular regard to his Church.* This is the Signet on his hand, as a Bracelet upon his arm; this is his Garden which he delights to dress; if he prunes it, it is to purge it; if he Digs about his Vine, and wounds the Branches, 'tis to make it more Beautiful with new Clusters, and re-store it to a fruitful Vigour.

2. *All great deliverances are to be ascrib'd to God, as the principal Author, who soe-*



*are the Instruments. The Lord doth build up Jerusalem, he gathers together the out-casts of Israel.* This great deliverance from Babylon, is not to be ascrib'd to *Cyrus* or *Darius*, or the rest of our favourers; 'tis the Lord that doth it; we had his Promise for it, we have now his Performance. Let us not ascribe that which is the effect of his Truth, only to the good Will of men; 'tis Gods act, not by Might, nor by Power, nor by Weapons of War, or strength of Horses, but by the Spirit of the Lord. He sent Prophets to comfort us while we were exiles; and now he hath stretched out his own Arm to work our deliverance, according to his Word; blind man looks so much upon Instruments, that he hardly takes notice of God, either in Afflictions or Mercies, and this is the cause that robs God of so much Prayer and Praise in the World.

Verse 3. *He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their Wounds.* He hath now restored those who had no hope but in his Word; he hath dealt with them as a tender and skilful Chirurgeon; he hath applyed his curing Plaisters, and dropped in his Sovereign Balsams; he hath now furnisht our fainting hearts with refreshing Cordials, and comforted our Wounds with strengthening Ligatures.

How gracious is God, that restores Liberty to the Captives, and Righteousness to the Penitent? mans misery is the fittest opportunity for God to make his Mercy illustrious in it self, and most welcome to the Patient.

He proceeds verse 4. Wonder not that God calls together the out-casts, and singles them out from every corner, for a return; why can he not do this, as well as tell the number of the Stars, and call them all by their Names \* &

Ver. 4.

There are none of his People so despicable in the eye of man, but they are known and regarded by God; tho' they are clouded in the World, yet they are the Stars of the World; and shall God number the inanimate Stars in the Heavens, and make no account of his living Stars on the Earth? no, wherever they are dispersed, he will not forget them; however they are afflicted, he will not despise them; the Stars are so numerous, that they are innumerable by man; some are visible and known by men, others lie more hid and undiscovered in a confused Light, as those in the Milky-way, man cannot see one of them distinctly.

God knows all his People. As he can do what is above the power of man to perform, so he understands what is above the skill of man to discover; shall man measure God by his scantiness? Proud man must not equal himself to God, nor cut God as short as his own Line.

He tells the number of the Stars, and calls them all by their Names. He hath them all in his List; as Generals the Names of their Soldiers in their Muster-Roll, for they are his Host, which he Marshals in the Heavens, as *Isa. 40. 26.* where you have the like Expression; he knows them more distinctly than man can know any thing, and so distinctly as to call them all by their Names: He knows their Names, that is, their natural offices, influences, the different degrees of heat and light, their order and motion; and all of them, the least glimmering Star as well as the most glaring Planet; this man cannot do; Tell the Stars if thou be able to number them, *Gen. 15. 5.* saith God to *Abraham* (whom *Josephus* represents as a great Astronomer) yea they cannot be numbred, *Jer. 33. 22.* and the uncertainty of the Opinions of men, evidenceth their ignorance of their number; some reckoning 1022, others 1025, others 1098, others 7000, besides those that by reason of their mixture of Light with one another, cannot be distinctly discern'd, and others perhaps so high, as not to be reach'd by the eye of man. To impose Names on things, and Names according to their Natures, is both an Argument of Power and Dominion, and of Wisdom and Understanding: from the imposition of Names upon the Creatures by *Adam*, the Knowledg of *Adam* is generally concluded; and it was also a fruit of that Dominion God allowed him over the Creatures. Now he that Numbers and Names the Stars that seem to lie confus'd among one another, as well as those that appear to us in an unclouded Night, may well be suppos'd accurately to know his People, tho' lurking in secret Caverns, and know those that are fit to be Instruments of their deliverance; the one is as easy to him as the other; and the Number of the one as distinctly known by him, as the Multitude of the other.

For great is our Lord, and of great Power, his Understanding is Infinite\*. He wants not Knowledg to know the objects, nor Power to effect his Will concerning them.



רַב  
רַבְרַב

them. *Of great Power\**. Much Power, plenteous in Power; so the word רַב is rendered *Psal. 5. 15\**. a multitude of Power, as well as a multitude of Mercy; a Power that exceeds all Created Power and Understanding.

אֵין סוֹפֶר

*His Understanding is Infinite*. You may not imagine how he can call all the Stars by Name; the multitude of the visible being so great, and the multitude of the invisible being greater; but you must know, that as God is Almighty, so he is Omniscient; and as there is no end of his Power, so no account can exactly be given of his Understanding; *His Understanding is Infinite\**. No number or account of it; and so the same Words are rendered *Joel 1. 6. a Nation strong, and without number*: No end of his Understanding; *Syriack*, no measure, no bounds†. His Essence is Infinite, and so is his Power and Understanding; and so vast is his Knowledge, that we can no more comprehend it, than we can measure spaces that are without limits, or tell the minutes or hours of Eternity. Who then can fathom that whereof there is no number, but which exceeds all, so that there is no *searching of it out\**? he knows Universals, he knows Particulars: We must not take understanding here, as noting a faculty, but the use of the understanding in the knowledge of things, and the Judgment in the consideration of them, and so it is often used.

הַנִּיחַ

In the *Verse* there is a description of God.

1. In his *Essence, great is our Lord.*
2. In his *Power, of great Power.*
3. In his *Knowledge, his Understanding is Infinite*; his Understanding is his Eye, and his Power is his Arm. Of his *Infinite Understanding*, I am to Discourse.

*Doctrine. God hath an Infinite Knowledge and Understanding.* All Knowledge. Omnipresence which before we spake of, respects his Essence; Omniscience, respects his Understanding, according to our manner of Conception.

This is clear in *Scripture*; hence God is called a God of Knowledge, *1 Sam. 2. 3. The Lord is a God of Knowledge*, Heb. *Knowledges* in the Plural Number, of all kind of Knowledge; 'tis spoken there to quell mans Pride in his own reason and parts; what is the Knowledge of man but a spark to the whole Element of Fire, a grain of Dust, and worse than nothing, in comparison of the Knowledge of God, as his Essence is in comparison of the Essence of God? *All kind of Knowledge*. He knows what Angels know, what Man knows, and infinitely more; he knows himself, his own operations, all his Creatures, the notions and thoughts of them; he is understanding above understanding, mind above mind, the mind of minds, the light of lights; this the *Greek* word *οὐδὲ* signifies in the Etymology of it, of *οὐδὲν* to see, to contemplate; and *δαμω* of *δαω* scio. The Names of God signify a nature viewing and piercing all things; and the attribution of our senses to God in *Scripture*, as Hearing and Seeing, which are the Senses whereby Knowledge enters into us, signifies Gods Knowledge.

1. *The Notion of Gods Knowledge of all things lies above the ruins of Nature*; it was not obliterated by the Fall of Man. It was necessary offending man was to know that he had a Creator whom he had injured, that he had a Judge to Try and Punish him; since God thought fit to keep up the World, it had been kept up to no purpose, had not this notion been continued alive in the minds of men; there would not have been any practice of his Laws, no bar to the worst of Crimes. If men had thought they had to deal with an Ignorant Deity, there could be no practice of Religion: Who would lift up his eyes, or spread his hands towards Heaven, if he imagin'd his Devotion were directed to a God as blind as the Heathens imagin'd Fortune? To what boot would it be for them to make Heaven and Earth resound with their Cries, if they had not thought God had an Eye to see them, and an Ear to hear them? And indeed the very notion of a God at the first blush, speaks him a Being endued with Understanding; no man can imagine a Creator void of one of the noblest Perfections belonging to those Creatures that are the Flower and Cream of his Works.

2. *Therefore all Nations acknowledg this*, as well as the Existence and Being of God. \*No Nation but had their Temples, particular Ceremonies of Worship, and presented their Sacrifices, which they could not have been so vain as to do, without an acknowledgment of this Attribute. This notion of Gods Knowledge owed not



its rise to Tradition, but to natural implantation; it was born and grew up with every rational Creature. Though the several Nations and men of the World agreed not in one kind of Deity, or in their Sentiments of his Nature or other Perfections, some judging him Clothed with a fine and pure Body; others judging him an uncompounded Spirit; some fixing him to a seat in the Heavens; others owning his Universal Presence in all parts of the World; yet they all agreed in the Universality of his Knowledge; and their own Consciences reflecting their Crimes, unknown to any but themselves, would keep this notion in some vigor whether they would or no. Now this being implanted in the minds of all men by nature, cannot be false; for nature imprints not in the minds of all men an assent to a falsity. Nature would not pervert the reason and minds of men: Universal notions of God are from Original, not lapsed Nature, and preserved in mankind in order to a restoration from a lapsed state. The Heathens did acknowledg this: in all the solemn Covenants, solemniz'd with Oaths and the invocation of the Name of God, this Attribute was suppos'd. They confest Knowledge to be peculiar to the Deity; *Scientia Deorum vita*, saith Cicero. Some called him *Nous*, *mens*, *mind*, pure understanding, without any note *Εὐθετος*, the inspector of all. As they called him Life, because he was the Author of Life; so they called him *intellectus*, because he was the Author of all Knowledge and Understanding in his Creatures; And one being askt, Whether any man could be hid from God? no saith he, not so much as thinking: Some call him the Eye of the World\*; and the Egyptians represented God by an Eye on the top of a Scepter, because God is all Eye, and can be ignorant of nothing.

Agamemnon,  
Iliad B. 3.  
v. 8 making a  
Covenant  
with Priam,  
invokes the  
Sun *Ἡελίο*  
*ὦ πάτερ ἐγώ*  
*ἄς ἔγ' ἴδω*  
*ἔπαυσε*.  
\* Gamach in  
1 Pa. Aquil. C.  
14. cap. 1. p.  
119.  
Clem. Alexand.  
from lib. 6.

And the same Nation made Eyes and Ears of the most excellent Metals, Consecrating them to God, and hanging them up in the midst of their Temples, in signification of Gods seeing and hearing all things; hence they called God Light, as well as the Scripture, because all things are visible to him.

For the better understanding of this, we will enquire,

1. What kind of Knowledge or Understanding there is in God.
2. What God knows.
3. How God knows things.
4. The proof, that God knows all things.
5. The Use of all to our selves.

I. What kind of Understanding or Knowledge there is in God?

The Knowledge of God in Scripture hath various Names, according to the various relations or objects of it: In respect of present things, 'tis called Knowledge or Sight; in respect of things past, Remembrance; in respect of things future, or to come, 'tis called Fore-Knowledge or Prescience, 1 Pet. 1. 2. in regard of the Universality of the Objects, it is called Omniscience; in regard of the simple Understanding of things 'tis called Knowledge; in regard of acting and modelling the ways of acting, 'tis called Wisdom and Prudence, Eph. 1. 8. He must have Knowledge, otherwise he could not be Wise; Wisdom is the Flower of Knowledge, and Knowledge is the Root of Wisdom.

As to what this Knowledge is; if we know what Knowledge is in man, we may apprehend what it is in God, removing all Imperfection from it, and ascribing to him the most eminent way of understanding; because we cannot comprehend God, but as he is pleased to condescend to us in his own ways of Discovery; that is, under some way of similitude to his perfectest Creatures; therefore we have a notion of God by his Understanding and Will; Understanding, whereby he conceives and apprehends things; Will, whereby he extends himself in acting according to his Wisdom; and whereby he doth approve or disapprove: Yet we must not measure his Understanding by our own, or think it to be of so gross a Temper as a Created mind; that he hath *Eyes of Flesh*, or sees or knows as man sees\*. We can no more measure his Knowledge by ours, than we can measure his Essence by our Essence: As he hath an incomprehensible Essence, to which ours is but as a Drop of a Bucket; so he hath an incomprehensible Knowledge, to which ours is but as a grain of Dust, or meer Darknels: his thoughts are above our thoughts, as the Heavens are above the Earth.

Job 10. 4.



The Knowledge of God is variously divided by the *Schools*, and acknowledg'd by all Divines.

1. A Knowledge *visionis & simplicis intelligentiae*; the one we may call a *Sight*, the other an *Understanding*; the one refers to sense, the other to the mind.

1. A Knowledge of *Vision or Sight*; Thus God knows himself and all things that really were, are, or shall be in time; all those things which he hath Decreed to be, tho' they are not yet actually sprung up in the World, but lye couchant in their Causes.

2. A Knowledge of *Intelligence, or simple Understanding*; the object of this is not things that are in Being, or that shall by any Decree of God ever be existent in the World; but such things as are possible to be wrought by the Power of God, tho' they shall never in the least peep up into Being, but lye for ever wrapt up in Darkness and nothing\*. This also is a necessary Knowledge to be allowed to God, because the object of this Knowledge is necessary. The possibility of more Creatures than ever were or shall be, is a conclusion that hath a necessary Truth in it; as it is necessary that the power of God can produce more Creatures, tho' it be not necessary that it should produce more Creatures; so it is necessary that whatsoever the Power of God can work, is possible to be. And as God knows this possibility, so he knows all the objects that are thus possible; and herein doth much consist the Infiniteness of his Knowledge, as shall be shewn presently.

These two kinds of Knowledge differ; That of *Vision*, is of things which God hath Decreed to be, tho' they are not yet. That of *Intelligence*, is of things which never shall be; yet they may be, or are possible to be, if God please to Will and Order their Being; one respects things that shall be; the other, things that may be, and are not repugnant to the Nature of God to be: The Knowledge of *Vision* follows the Act of Gods Will, and supposeth an Act of Gods Will before, Decreeing things to be. (If we could suppose any *first or second* in Gods Decree, we might say God knew them as *possible* before he Decreed them; he knew them as *future* because he Decreed them.) For without the Will of God Decreeing a thing to come to pass, God cannot know that it will infallibly come to pass. But the Knowledge of *Intelligence* stands without any Act of his Will, in order to the Being of those things he knows; he knows possible things only in his Power; he knows other things both in his Power, as able to effect them; and in his Will, as determining the Being of them; such Knowledge we must grant to be in God, for there is such a kind of knowledge in man; for man doth not only know and see what is before his eyes in this World, but he may have a conception of many more Worlds, and many more Creatures, which he knows are possible to the Power of God.

2. Secondly, There is a *speculative and practical knowledge in God*.

1. A *speculative knowledge* is, when the truth of a thing is known without a respect to any working or practical operation. The knowledge of things possible is in God only speculative, \* and some say Gods knowledge of himself is only speculative, because there is nothing for God to work in himself: and tho' he knows himself, yet this knowledge of himself doth not terminate there, but flows into a love of himself, and delight in himself; yet this love of himself, and delight in himself, is not enough to make it a practical knowledge, because it is natural, and naturally and necessarily flows from the knowledge of himself and his own Goodness: he cannot but love himself, and delight in himself, upon the knowledge of himself. But that which is properly practise, is where there is a dominion over the action, and it is wrought not naturally and necessarily, but in a way of freedom and counsel. As when we see a beautiful Flower or other thing, there ariseth a delight in the mind; this no man will call Practise, because it is a natural affection of the Will, arising from the virtue of the object, without any consideration of the Understanding in a practical manner by counselling, commanding, &c.

2. A *Practical knowledge*, which tends to operation and practise, and is the principle of working about things that are known; as the knowledge an Artificer hath in an Art or Mystery. This knowledge is in God: the knowledge he hath of the things he hath decreed, is such a kind of knowledge; for it terminates in the act of Creation, which is not a natural and necessary act, as the loving himself, and delighting in himself is, but wholly free: for it was at his liberty whether he would create

Suarez de Deo  
lib. 3. cap. 4. p.  
130.

Suarez de Deo  
lib. 3. cap. 4.  
p. 138.



create them or no; this is called *discretion*, Jer. 10. 12. *He hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion*. Such also is his knowledg of the things he hath created, and which are in being, for it terminates in the government of them for his own glorious ends. 'Tis by this knowledg *the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down their dew* \*. This is a knowledg whereby he knows the essence, qualities, and properties of what he creates and governs in order to his own glory, and the common good of the World over which he resides; so that *speculative* knowledg is Gods knowledg of himself and things possible, *practical* knowledg is his knowledg of his creatures and things governable; yet in some sort this practical knowledg is not only of things that are made, but of things which are possible, which God might make, tho' he will not: for as he knows that they can be created, so he knows how they are to be created, and how to be governed, tho' he never will create them. This is a practical knowledg: for it is not requisite to constitute a knowledg practical, actually to act, but that the knowledg in it self be referrible to action \*. Prov 3. 20.

3. There is a *knowledg of approbation, as well as apprehension*. This the Scripture often mentions: words of understanding are used to signify the acts of affection. This knowledg adds to the simple act of the understanding, the complacency and pleasure of the will; and is improperly knowledg, because it belongs to the Will, and not to the Understanding; only it is radically in the understanding, because affection implies knowledg; men cannot approve of that which they are ignorant of. Thus knowledg is taken, Amos 3. 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth*. And 2 Tim. 2. 19. *The Lord knows who are his*, that is, he loves them; he doth not only know them, but acknowledg them for his own: it notes not only an exact understanding, but a special care of them; and so is that to be understood, Gen. 1. *God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good*: that is, he saw it with an eye of approbation, as well as apprehension. This is grounded upon Gods knowledg of *Vision*, his sight of his creatures; for God doth not love or delight in any thing but what is actually in being, or what he hath decreed to bring into being. On the contrary also, when God doth not approve, he is said not to know, Mat. 25. 12. *I know you not*: and Mat. 7. 23. *I never knew you*: he doth not approve of their Works: 'tis not an ignorance of Understanding, but an ignorance of Will; for whiles he saith he never knew them, he testifies that he did know them, in rendring the reason of his disapproving them, because he knows all their Works: so he knows them, and doth not know them, in a different manner: he knows them so as to *understand* them; but he doth not know them so as to *love* them.

Saurez de Deo  
13 c. 4. p. 140.

We must then ascribe an *universal* knowledg to God. If we deny him a speculative knowledg, or knowledg of intelligence, we destroy his Deity, we make him ignorant of his own Power: if we deny him Practical knowledg, we deny our selves to be his creatures: for as his creatures, we are the fruits of this his discretion discovered in Creation: if we deny his knowledg of *Vision*, we deny his governing Dominion. How can he exercise a Sovereign and uncontrollable Dominion, that is ignorant of the nature and qualities of the things he is to govern? If he had not Knowledg, he could make no Revelation; he that knows not, cannot dictate; we could then have no Scripture. To deny God Knowledg, is to dash out the Scripture, and demolish the Deity.

God is describ'd in Zech. 3. 9. *with seven eyes*, to shew his perfect Knowledg of all things, all Occurrences in the World; and the *Cherubims*, or whatsoever is meant by the *Wings*, are described to be *full of Eyes*, both *before* and *behind* \*, round about them; much more is God all Eye, all Ear, all Understanding. The Sun is a natural Image of God, if the Sun had an Eye, it would see; if it had an Understanding, it would know all visible things; it would see what it shines upon, and understand what it influenceth in the most obscure Bowels of the Earth. Doth God excell his Creature the Sun in Excellency and Beauty, and not in Light and Understanding? certainly more than the Sun excels an Atome or grain of Dust. Ezek 1. 18

We may yet make some representation of this Knowledg of God by a lower thing, a Picture, which seems to look upon every one, tho' there be never so great a multitude in the Room where it hangs; no man can cast his Eye upon it, but it seems



seems to behold him in particular, and so exactly as if there were none but him upon whom the eye of it were fixt; and every man finds the same cast of it; shall Art frame a thing of that Nature, and shall not the God of Art and all Knowledge, be much more in reality than that is in imagination? Shall not God have a far greater capacity to behold every thing in the World, which is infinitely less to him than a wide Room to a Picture?

II. The second thing, *what God knows?* how far his Understanding reaches?

1. *God knows himself, and only knows himself.* This is the first and original knowledge, wherein he excels all Creatures: No man doth exactly know himself; much less doth he understand the full nature of a Spirit; much less still the Nature and Perfections of God; for what proportion can there be between a finite faculty and an infinite object? Herein consists the Infiniteness of Gods Knowledge, That he knows his own Essence, that he knows that which is unknowable to any else. It doth not so much consist in knowing the Creatures which he hath made, as in knowing himself who was never made. 'Tis not so much infinite, because he knows all things which are in the World, or that shall be; or things that he can make, because the number of them is finite; but because he hath a perfect and comprehensive knowledge of his own infinite Perfections\*. Tho' it be said that Angels see his Face, Math. 18. 10. that sight notes rather their immediate Attendance, than their exact Knowledge; they see some signs of his Presence and Majesty, more illustrious and express than ever appear'd to man in this Life; but the Essence of God is invisible to them, hid from them in the secret place of Eternity; none knows God but himself, 1 Cor. 2. 11. *what man knows the things of a man save the spirit of a man? so the things of God knows no man but the spirit of God; the spirit of God searches the deep things of God; searcheth, that is, exactly knows, thoroughly understands, as those who have their eyes in every Chink and Crevice, to see what lies hid there; the word search, notes not an Enquiry, but an exact Knowledge, such as men have of things upon a diligent scrutiny; as when God is said to search the Heart and the Reins, it doth not signify a precedent ignorance, but an exact Knowledge of the most intimate corners of the hearts of men. As the Conceptions of men are unknown to any but themselves; so the depths of the Divine Essence, Perfections and Decrees, are unknown to any but to God himself; he only knows what he is, and what he knows, what he can do, and what he hath Decreed to do.*

1. For first, *If God did not know himself, he would not be perfect.* 'Tis the Perfection of a Creature to know it self, much more a Perfection belonging to God. If God did not comprehend himself, he would want an Infinite Perfection, and so would cease to be God, in being defective in that which intellectual Creatures in some measure possess. As God is the most perfect Being, so he must have the most perfect Understanding: If he did not understand himself, he would be under the greatest Ignorance, because he would be ignorant of the most excellent object. Ignorance is the Imperfection of the Understanding; and ignorance of ones self is a greater Imperfection than ignorance of things without. If God should know all things without himself, and not know himself, he would not have the most perfect Knowledge, because he would not have the knowledge of the best of objects.

2. *Without the Knowledge of himself, he could not be blessed.* Nothing can have any complacency in it self, without the Knowledge of it self. Nothing can in a rational manner enjoy it self, without understanding it self. The Blessedness of God consists not in the knowledge of any thing without him, but in the knowledge of himself and his own excellency, as the principle of all things; If therefore he did not perfectly know himself and his own happiness, he could not enjoy a happiness; for to be, and not to know to be, is as if a thing were not. *He is God blessed for ever, Rom. 9. 5. and therefore for ever had a Knowledge of himself.*

3. *Without the Knowledge of himself he could Create nothing.* For he would be ignorant of his own Power, and his own Ability; and he that doth not know how far his Power extends, could not act: If he did not know himself, he could know nothing; and he that knows nothing, can do nothing; he could not know an Effect to be possible to him, unless he knew his own Power as a Cause.

4. *Without the Knowledge of himself, he could govern nothing.* He could not without

\* Moulin.



without the knowledg of his own Holiness and Righteousness, prescribe Laws to men, nor without a knowledg of his own nature, order himself a manner of Worship suitable to it.

All Worship must be congruous to the dignity and nature of the object worshipped; he must therefore know his own Authority whereby Worship was to be enacted, his own Excellency to which Worship was to be suited, his own Glory to which Worship was to be directed. If he did not know himself, he did not know what to punish, because he would not know what was contrary to himself: not knowing himself, he would not know what was a contempt of him, and what an adoration of him; what was worthy of God, and what was unworthy of him. In fine, he could not know other things, unless he knew himself: unless he knew his own Power, he could not know how he created things: unless he knew his own Wisdom, he could not know the beauty of his Works: unless he knew his own Glory, he could not know the end of his Works: unless he knew his own Holiness, he could not know what was evil: and unless he knew his own Justice, he could not know how to punish the Crimes of his offending creatures. And therefore,

1. *God knows himself*, because his Knowledg with his Will is the cause of all other things that can fall under his cognizance: he knows himself first, before he can know any other thing; that is, first according to our conceptions; for indeed God knows himself and all other things at once; He is the first Truth, and therefore is the first object of his own understanding. There is nothing more excellent than himself, and therefore nothing more known to him than himself. As he is all Knowledg, so he hath in himself the most excellent object of Knowledg. To understand is properly to know ones self. No object is so intelligible to God as God is to himself; nor so intimately and immediately joined with his Understanding as himself: for his Understanding is his Essence, himself.

2. *He knows himself by his own Essence.* He knows not himself and his own Power, by the effect, because he knows himself from Eternity, before there was a World, or any effect of his Power extant. 'Tis not a knowledg by the Cause, for God hath no cause; nor a knowledg of himself by any species or any thing from without: If it were any thing from without himself, that must be created or uncreated; if uncreated, it would be God; and so we must either own many Gods, or own it to be his Essence, and so not distinct from himself: If created, then his knowledg of himself would depend upon a creature; he could not then know himself from eternity, but in time, because nothing can be created from eternity, but in time. God knows not himself by any faculty, for there is no composition in God, he is not made up of parts, but is a simple being; some therefore have called God, not *intellectus*, understanding, because that favours of a faculty; but *intellectio*, intellection. God is all act in the knowledg of himself, and his knowledg of other things.

3. *God therefore knows himself perfectly, comprehensively.* Nothing in his own nature is concealed from him, he reflects upon every thing that he is \*. There is a positive comprehension, so God doth not comprehend himself; for what is comprehended, hath bounds; and what is comprehended by it self, is finite to it self: and there is a negative comprehension, God so comprehends himself; nothing in his own nature is obscure to him, unknown by him. For there is as great a perfection in the understanding of God to know, as there is in the Divine nature to be known. The Understanding of God, and the Nature of God, are both infinite, and so equal to one another; his Understanding is equal to himself; he knows himself so well, that nothing can be known by him more perfectly, than himself is known to himself. He knows himself in the highest manner, because nothing is so proportion'd to the Understanding of God as himself: He knows his own Essence, Goodness, Power, all his Perfections, Decrees, Intentions, Acts, the infinite capacity of his own Understanding, so that nothing of himself is in the dark to himself. And in this respect some use this expression, That the infiniteness of God is in a manner finite to himself, because it is comprehended by himself.

*Magalaneus*

Thus



Thus God transcends all Creatures; thus his Understanding is truly Infinite, because nothing but himself is an infinite Object for it: What Angels may understand of themselves perfectly, I know not; but no Creature in the World understands himself: Man understands not fully the excellency and parts of his own nature; upon Gods knowledge of himself depends the Comfort of his People, and the Terror of the Wicked; this is also a clear Argument for his Knowledge of all other things, without himself; he that knows himself, must needs know all other things less than himself, and which were made by himself: When the knowledge of his own Immen- sity and Infiniteness is not an object too difficult for him; the knowledge of a finite and limited Creature in all his actions, thoughts, circumstances, cannot be too hard for him. Since he knows himself who is Infinite, he cannot but know whatsoever is Finite; this is the Foundation of all his other Knowledge; the knowledge of every thing present, past, and to come, is far less than the knowledge of himself. He is more incomprehensible in his own nature, than all things Created, or that can be Created, put together can be: If he then have a perfect comprehensive knowledge of his own nature, any knowledge of all other things is less than the knowledge of himself; this ought to be well considered by us, as the Fountain whence all his other knowledge flows.

2. Therefore God knows all other things, whether they be possible, past, present, or future.

Whether they be things that he can do, but will never do; or Whether they be things that he hath done, but are not now; things that are now in Being, or things that are not now existing, that lie in the Womb of their proper and immediate Causes\*; If his understanding be Infinite, he then knows all things whatsoever that can be known, else his Understanding would have bounds, and what hath limits is not infinite, but finite; if he be ignorant of any one thing that is knowable, that is a bound to him, it comes with an exception, *a but*, God knows all things *but this*, a bar is then set to his Knowledge. If there were any thing, any particular circumstance in the whole Creation, or Non-Creation, and possible to be known by him, and yet vvere unknown to him, he could not be said to be Omniscient. As he vwould not be Almighty, if any one thing that implied not a repugnancy to his Nature, did transcend his Power.

1. First, *all things possible*. No Question but God knowvs vwhat he could create, as vwell as vwhat he hath created: vwhat he vwould not Create, as vwell as vwhat he resolved to Create; he knew vwhat he vwould not do, before he vvilled to do it; this is the next thing vvhich declares the Infiniteness of his Understanding: For as his Power is infinite, and can Create innumerable Worlds and Creatures; so is his Knowledge infinite, in knowing innumerable things possible to his Power. Possibles are infinite; that is, there is no end of vwhat God can do, and therefore no end of vwhat God doth know; othervvise his Power vwould be more Infinite than his Knowledge: If he knew only vwhat is Created, there vwould be an end of his Understanding, because all Creatures may be numbred, but possible things cannot be reckoned up by any Creature: There is the same reason of this in Eternity; vwhen never so many numbers of Years are run out, there is still more to come, there still vvents an end; and vwhen Millions of Worlds are Created, there is no more an end of Gods Power, than of Eternity: Thus there is no end of his Understanding; that is, his Knowledge is not terminated by any thing.

This the Scripture gives us some account of; God knows things that are not, *for he calls things that are not, as if they were*, Rom. 4. 17. he calls things that are not, as if they were in Being; what he calls is not unknown to him: If he knows things that are not, he knows things that may never be; as he knows things that shall be, because he Wills them; so he knows things that might be, because he is able to effect them: He knew that the Inhabitants of *Kelab* would betray *David* to *Saul*, if he remained in that place, 1 *Sam.* 23. 11. he knew what they would do upon that occasion, tho' it was never done; as he knew what was in their Power and in their Wills, so he must needs know vwhat is vwithin the compass of his own Power: As he can permit more than he doth permit; so he knowvs vwhat he can permit, and vwhat upon that permission vwould be done by his Creatures; so God knew the possibility of the *Tyrans* Repentance, if they had had the same means, heard the same



same Truths, and beheld the same Miracles vvhich vvere offer'd to the Ears, and presented to the Eyes of the *Jews*, *Matth. 11. 21.*

This must needs be so, because

1. *Man knows things that are possible to him, tho' he will never effect them.* A Carpenter knows a House in the model he hath of it in his head, tho' he never build a House according to that model: A Watch-maker hath the frame of a Watch in his mind, which he will never work with his Instruments: Man knows what he could do, tho' he never intends to do it\*. As the Understanding of man hath a vertue, that where it sees one man, it may imagine Thousands of men of the same shape, stature, form, parts; yea taller, more vigorous, spritely, intelligent than the man he sees; because it is possible such a number may be. Shall not the understanding of God much more know what he is able to effect, since the understanding of man can know what he is never able to produce, yet may be produced by God, *viz.* that he who produced this man which I see, can produce a Thousand exactly like him? If the Divine Understanding did not know infinite things, but were confin'd to a certain number; it may be demanded whether God can understand any thing farther than that number, or whether he cannot? If he can, then he doth actually understand all those things which he hath a power to understand; otherwise there would be an increase of Gods knowledg, if it were actually now, and not before, and so he would be more perfect than he was before; if he cannot understand them, then he cannot understand what a human mind can understand; for our understandings can multiply Numbers *in infinitum*; and there is no number so great, but a man can still add to it; We must suppose the Divine Understanding more excellent in Knowledg. God knows all that a man can imagine, tho' it never were, nor never shall be; he must needs know whatsoever is in the Power of man to imagine or think, because God concurs to the support of the faculty in that Imagination; and tho' it may be replied, an *Atheist* may imagine that there is no God; a man may imagine that God can Lie, or that he can be destroy'd; doth God know therefore that he is not? or that he can Lie, or cease to be? No, he knows he cannot; his Knowledg extends to things possible, not to things impossible to himself; he knows it as imaginable by man, not as possible in it self; because 'tis utterly impossible, and repugnant to the nature of God, since he eminently contains in himself all things possible, past, present and to come; he cannot know himself without knowing them.

*Ficin de immort. lib. 2. cap. 10.*

*Garnet.*

2. *God knowing his own power, knows whatsoever is in his power to effect.* If he knows not all things possible, he could not know the extent of his own power, and so would not know himself, as a cause sufficient for more things than he hath Created: How can he comprehend himself, who comprehends not all effluxes of things possible that may come from him and be wrought by him? How can he know himself as a cause, if he know not the Objects and Works which he is able to produce\*? Since the power of God extends to numberless things, his Knowledg also extends to numberless objects; as if a Unite could see the numbers it could produce, it would see Infinite numbers; for a Unite is, as it were, all Number. God knowing the fruitfulness of his own Vertue, knows a numberless multitude of things which he can do, more than have been done, or shall be done by him; he therefore knows innumerable Worlds, innumerable Angels, with higher Perfections than any of them which he hath Created, have: So that if the World should last many Millions of Years, God knows that he can every day Create another World more capacious than this; and having Created an unconceivable number, he knows he could still Create more: So that he beholds infinite Worlds, infinite numbers of Men and other Creatures in himself, infinite kinds of things, infinite species and individuals under those kinds, even as many as he can Create, if his Will did order and determine it\*; for not being ignorant of his own Power, he cannot be ignorant of the effects wherein it may display and discover it self. A comprehensive knowledg of his own Power doth necessarily include the objects of that power; so he knows whatsoever he could effect, and whatsoever he could permit, if he pleased to do it.

*Ficin de immort. lib. 2. cap. 10.*

If God could not understand more than he hath created, he could not create more than he hath created: for it cannot be conceived how he can create any thing



thing that he is ignorant of; what he doth not know, he cannot do: he must know also the extent of his own goodness, and how far any thing is capable to partake of it: so much therefore as any detract from the Knowledge of God, they detract from his Power.

3. 'Tis further evident that God knows all possible things, *because he knew those things which he has created, before they were created*, when they were yet in a possibility. If God knew things before they were created, he knew them when they were in a possibility, and not in actual reality. 'Tis absurd to imagine that his Understanding did lacquy after the creatures, and draw knowledg from them after they were created. 'Tis absurd to think that God did create, before he knew what he could or would create. If he knew those things he did create when they were possible, he must know all things which he can create, and therefore all things that are possible.

To conclude this, We must consider that this Knowledge is of another kind than his knowledg of things that are or shall be. He sees possible things as possible, not as things that ever are or shall be. If he saw them as existing or future, and they shall never be, this knowledg would be false, there would be a deceit in it, which cannot be. He knows those things not in themselves, because they are not, nor in their causes because they shall never be: he knows them in his own Power, not in his Will: He understands them as able to produce them, not as willing to effect them. Things possible he knows only in his Power, things future he knows both in his Power and his Will, as he is both able and determin'd in his own good pleasure to give being to them. Those that shall never come to pass, he knows only in himself, as a sufficient cause; those things that shall come into being, he knows in himself as the efficient cause, and also in their immediate second causes.

This should teach us to spend our thoughts in the admirations of the excellency of God, and the divine Knowledge; his Understanding is infinite.

2. *God knows all things past.* This is an argument used by God himself to elevate his Excellency above all the commonly adored Idols, Isa. 41. 22. *Let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them.* He knows them as if they were now present, and not past: for indeed in his Eternity there is nothing past or future to his knowledg. This is called remembrance in Scripture, as when God remembred *Rachels* prayer for a child, Gen. 30. 22. and he is said to put *tears* into his bottle, and write them in his Book of Accompts, which signifies the exact and unerring knowledg in God of the minute circumstances past in the World; and this knowledg is called a *book of remembrance*, Mal. 3. 16. signifying the perpetual presence of things past, before him. There are two elegant expressions, signifying the certainty and perpetuity of Gods knowledg of sins past, Job 14. 17. *My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sowest up my iniquity.* A Metaphor taken from men that put up in a bag the money they would charily keep, tie the bag, sow up the holes, and bind it hard that nothing may fall out; or a vessel wherein they reserve liquors, and daub it with pitch and glutinous stuff, that nothing may leak out, but be safely kept till the time of use. Or else, as some think, from the bags *Attorneys* carry with them, full of Writings, when they are to manage a Cause against a person. Thus we find God often in Scripture calling to mens minds their past actions, upbraiding them with their ingratitude, wherein he testifies his remembrance of his own past benefits, and their Crimes. His knowledg in this regard hath something of infinity in it, since tho' the sins of all men that have been in the World are finite in regard of number, yet when the sins of one man in thoughts, words, and deeds, are numberless in his own account, and perhaps in the count of any creature, the sins of all the vast numbers of men that have been, or shall be, are much more numberless, it cannot be less than infinite knowledg that can make a collection of them, and take a survey of them all at once.

If past things had not been known by God, how could *Moses* have been acquainted with the Original of things? How could he have declared the former transactions, wherein all Histories are silent but the Scripture? How could he know the cause of mans present misery so many ages after, wherewith all *Philosophy* was unacquainted? How could he have writ the order of the Creation, the



particulars of the sin of *Adam*, the circumstances of *Cains* murder, the private speech of *Lamech* to his Wives, if God had not revealed them? And how could a Revelation be made, if things past were forgotten by him? Do we not remember many things done among men, as well as by our selves, and reserve the forms of divers things in our minds, which rise as occasions are presented to draw them forth? And shall not God much more, who hath no cloud of darkness upon his understanding? A man that makes a curious Picture, hath the form of it in his mind before he made it; and if the fire burn it, the form of it in his mind is not destroyed by the fire, but retained in it. Gods memory is no less perfect than his understanding: If he did not know things past, he could not be a righteous Governour, or exercise any judicial act in a righteous manner; he could not dispense Rewards and Punishments according to his promises and threatnings, if things that were past could be forgotten by him; he could not require that which is past\*, if he did not remember that which is past. Eccles. 3. 15.

And tho' God be said to forget in Scripture, and not to know his People, and his People pray to him to remember them, as if he had forgotten them\*: This is improperly ascrib'd to God\*. As God is said to repent, when he changes things according to his Counsel beyond the expectation of men; so he is said to forget, when he defers the making good his Promise to the Godly, or his Threatnings to the Wicked; this is not a defect of Memory belonging to his mind, but an act of his Will: When he is said to remember his Covenant, 'tis to Will Grace according to his Covenant; when he is said to forget his Covenant, 'tis to intercept the influences of it, whereby to punish the Sin of his People; and when he is said not to know his People, 'tis not an absolute forgetfulness of them, but withdrawing from them the Testimonies of his Kindness, and clouding the Signs of his favour; so God in Pardon is said to forget Sin, not that he ceaseth to know it, but ceaseth to punish it: 'Tis not to be meant of a simple forgetfulness, or a lapse of his Memory, but of a Judicial Forgetfulness; so when his People in Scripture Pray, Lord Remember thy Word unto thy Servant; no more is to be understood, but Lord fulfil thy Word and Promise to thy Servant. Psal. 119. 49.  
\* Bradward.

3. *He knows things Present.* Heb. 4. 13. *All things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do;* This is grounded upon the Knowledge of himself; 'tis not so difficult to know all Creatures exactly, as to know himself, because they are finite, but himself is infinite; he knows his own Power, and therefore every thing through which his Omnipotence is diffus'd, all the acts and objects of it; not the least thing that is the Birth of his Power, can be conceal'd from him; he knows his own Goodness, and therefore every object upon which the warm beams of his Goodness strike; he therefore knows distinctly the properties of every Creature, because every Property in them is a Ray of his Goodness; he is not only the efficient, but the exemplary cause; therefore as he knows all that his Power hath wrought, as he is the efficient, so he knows them in himself as the pattern: As a Carpenter can give an account of every part and passage in a House he hath built, by consulting the Model in his own mind, whereby he built it. *He looked upon all things after he had made them, and pronounc'd them good,* Gen. 1. 3. full of a natural goodness he had endowed them with; he did not ignorantly pronounce them so, and call them good, whether he knew them or not; and therefore he knows them in particular, as he knew them all in their first Presence. Is there any reason he should be ignorant of every thing now present in the World, or that any thing that derives an existence from him as a free cause, should be concealed from him? If he did not know things present in their particularities, many things would be known by man, yea by Beasts, which the infinite God were ignorant of; and if he did not know all things present, but only some; 'tis possible for the most Blessed God to be deceived and be miserable: Ignorance is a Calamity to the Understanding: He could not prescribe Laws to his Creatures, unless he knew their Natures, to which those Laws were to be suited; no, not natural Ordinances to the Sun, Moon, and Heavenly Bodies, and inanimate Creatures, unless he knew the vigour and vertue in them, to execute those Ordinances; for to prescribe Laws above the nature of things, is inconsistent with the Wisdom of Government; he must know how far they were able to obey; whether the Laws were suited to their



their ability: And for his rational Creatures, Whether the Punishments annex to the Law, were proper, and suited to the Transgression of the Creature.

I. First, *He knows all Creatures from the highest to the lowest, the least as well as the greatest.* He knows the Ravens and their young ones\*; the Drops of Rain and Dew which he hath begotten\*, every Bird in the Air, as well as any man doth what he hath in a Cage at home, *Psal. 50. 11. I know all the Fowls in the Mountains, and the wild Beasts in the Field;* which some read *creeping things.* The Clouds are numbered in his Wisdom, *Job 38. 37.* every Worm in the Earth, every drop of Rain that falls upon the ground, the flakes of Snow, and the knots of Hail, the Sands upon the Sea-shore, the Hairs upon the Head; 'tis no more absurd to imagine that God knows them, than that God made them; they are all the effects of his Power, as well as the Stars, which he calls by their Names, as well as the most glorious Angel and blessed Spirit; he knows them as well, as if there were none but them in particular for him to know; the least things were framed by his Art as well as the greatest; the least things partake of his goodness as well as the greatest; he knows his own Arts, and his own Goodness, and therefore all the Stamps and Impressions of them upon all his Creatures; he knows the immediate causes of the least, and therefore the effects of those causes. Since his knowledg is infinite, it must extend to those things which are at the greatest distance from him, to those which approach nearest to not Being; since he did not want Power to Create, he cannot want Understanding to know every thing he hath Created, the dispositions, qualities, and virtues of the minutest Creature.

Nor is the *Understanding of God* embas'd, and suffers a diminution by the *Knowledg* of the vilest and most inconsiderable things: Is it not an imperfection to be ignorant of the nature of any thing? and can God have such a defect in his most perfect Understanding? Is the Understanding of man of an impurer Alloy by knowing the nature of the rankest Poysons? by understanding a Fly? or a small Insect? or by considering the deformity of a Toad? Is it not generally counted a note of a Dignified mind, to be able to Discourse of the Nature of them? Was Solomon, who knew all from the Cedar to the Hyssop, debas'd by so Rich a Present of Wisdom from his Creator? Is any Glas defil'd by presenting a Deformed Image? Is there any thing more vile than the *imaginations, which are only evil, and continually*? doth not the mind of man descend to the mud of the Earth, play the Adulterer or Idolater with mean objects, suck in the most unclean things? yet God knows these in all their circumstances, in every appearance, inside and outside. Is there any thing viler than some thoughts of men? than some actions of men? their unclean Beds and Gluttonous Vomiting, and *Luciferian Pride*? yet do not these fall under the Eye of God, in all their Nakedness? The *Second Person's* taking Human Nature, tho' it obscur'd, yet it did not disparage the Deity; or bring any disgrace to it: Is Gold the worse for being formed into the Image of a Fly? doth it not still retain the nobleness of the Metal? When men are despis'd for descending to the knowledg of mean and vile things, 'tis because they neglect the knowledg of the greater; and Sin in their enquiries after lesser things, with a neglect of that which concerns more the Honour of God and the Happiness of themselves; to be ambitious of such a Knowledg, and careless of that of more concern, is criminal and contemptible. But God knows the greatest as well as the least; mean things are not known by him to exclude the knowledg of the greater; nor are vile things govern'd by him to exclude the order of the better. The Deformity of Objects known by God doth not deform him, nor defile him; he doth not view them without himself, but within himself, wherein all things in their *Ideas* are Beautiful and Comely: Our knowledg of a Deformed thing, is not a Deforming of our Understanding, but is beautiful in the Knowledg, tho' it be not in the object; nor is there any fear that the Understanding of God should become material by knowing material things, any more than our Understandings lose their Spirituality by knowing the nature of Bodies; 'tis to be observed therefore that only those senses of men, as seeing, hearing, smelling, which have those qualities for their objects that come nearest the nature of spiritual things, as Light, Sounds, fragrant Odours, are ascrib'd to God in Scripture; not Touching or Tasting, which are senses that are not exercis'd



could without a more immediate commerce with gross matter; and the reason may be, because we should have no gross thoughts of God, as if he were a body, and made of matter, like the things he knows.

2. As he knows all Creatures, so God knows *all the actions of Creatures*. He counts in particular all the ways of men. *Doth he not see all my ways, and count all my steps?* Job 31. 4. He tells their *wandrings*, as if one by one, *Psal. 56. 8. His eyes are upon all the ways of man, and he sees all his goings;* Job. 34. 21. a Metaphor taken from men, when they look wistly, with fixed Eyes upon a thing, to view it in every circumstance, whence it comes, whether it goes, to observe every little motion of it. Gods Eye is not a wandering, but a fixed Eye; and the ways of man are not only *before his eyes*, but he doth exactly *ponder them*\*; as one that will not be ignorant of the least Mite in them, but weigh and examine them by the Standard of his Law; he may as well know the motions of our Members, as the Hairs of our Heads; the smallest actions before they be, whether Civil, Natural or Religious, fall under his Cognizance; what meaner than a man carrying a *Pitcher*, yet our Saviour foretels it, *Luke 22. 10.* God knows not only what men do, but what they would have done, had he not restrained them; what *Abimelech* would have done to *Sarah*, had not God put a Bar in his way, *Gen. 20. 6.* What a man that is taken away in his Youth, would have done, had he lived to a riper Age; yea he knows the most secret words as well as actions; the words spoken by the *King of Israel* in his *Bed-Chamber*, were revealed to *Elisba*, *2 Kings 6. 12.* and indeed how can any action of man be conceal'd from God? Can we view the various actions of a heap of Ants or a Hive of Bees in a glass, without turning our Eyes; and shall not God behold the actions of all men in the World, which are less than Bees or Ants in his Sight, and more visible to him than an Ant-Hill or Bee-Hive can be to the acutest eye of man?

3. As God knows all the actions of Creatures, so *he knows all the Thoughts of Creatures*. The thoughts are the most closetted acts of man, hid from men and Angels, unless disclos'd by some outward Expressions; but God descends into the depths and abysses of the Soul, discerns the most inward contrivances; nothing is impenetrable to him; the Sun doth not so much enlighten the Earth, as God understands the Heart; all thoughts are as visible to him, as Flies and Motes enclos'd in a body of transparent Chrystal; this man naturally allows to God. Men often speak to God by the motions of their minds and secret Ejaculations; which they would not do, if it were not naturally implanted in them, that God knows all their inward motions; the Scripture is plain and positive in this, *He tries the Heart and the Reins*, *Psal. 7. 9.* as men by the use of Fire discern the drossy and purer parts of Metals: The secret intentions and aims, the most lurking affections seated in the Reins; he knows that which no man, no Angel is able to know, which a man himself knows not, nor makes any particular reflection upon; yea *he weighs the Spirit*, *Prov. 16. 2.* he exactly numbers all the devices and inclinations of men, as men do every piece of Coyn they tell out of a heap. *He discerns the Thoughts and intents of the heart*, *Heb. 4. 12.* all that is in the mind, all that is in the affections, every stirring and purpose; so that not one *thought* can be withheld from him, *Job. 42. 2.* yea *Hell and Destruction are before him, much more then the Hearts of the Children of men?* *Prov. 15. 11.* he works all things in the Bowels of the Earth, and brings forth all things out of that Treasure, say some: but more naturally, God knows the whole state of the dead, all the receptacles and Graves of their bodies, all the bodies of men consumed by the Earth, or devoured by living Creatures; things that seem to be out of all Being; he knows the Thoughts of the Devils and Damned Creatures, whom he hath cast out of his care for ever, into the arms of his Justice, never more to cast a delightful glance towards them; not a secret in any Soul in Hell, (which he hath no need to know, because he shall not judg them by any of the Thoughts they now have, since they were condemned to punishment) is hid from him; much more is he acquainted with the Thoughts of living men, the counsels of whose hearts are yet to be manifested, in order to their Tryal and Censure; yea, he knows them before they spring up into actual being, *Psal. 139. 2. thou understandest my Thoughts afar off; my Thoughts*, that is, every Thought; tho' innumerable Thoughts pass through me in a day, and that in the Source and Fountain,

when



when it is yet in the Womb, before it is our Thought; if he knows them before their Existence, before they can be properly called ours; much more doth he know them when they actually spring up in us; he knows the tendency of them, where the Bird will light when it is in flight; he knows them exactly, he is therefore called a *discerner* or *criticizer of the Heart*, Heb. 4. 12. As a Critick discerns every Letter, Point, and Stop; he is more intimate with us than our Souls with our Bodies, and hath more the Possession of us than we have of our selves; he knows them by an inspection into the heart, not by the Mediation of second causes, by the looks or gestures of men, as men may discern the Thoughts of one another.

1. *God discerns all good motions of the Mind and Will.* These he puts into men, and needs must God know his own act; he knew the Son of Jeroboam to have some good thing in him towards the Lord God of Israel, 1 Kings 14. 13. and the integrity of David and Hezekiah; the freest motions of the Will and Affections to him. Lord, thou knowest that I love thee saith Peter, John 21. 17. Love can be no more restrain'd, than the Will it self can. A man may make another to grieve and desire, but none can force another to Love.

2. *God discerns all the evil motions of the Mind and Will.* Every imagination of the Heart, Gen. 6. 5. the vanity of mens thoughts, Psal. 94. 11. their inward darkness and deceitful disguises: No wonder that God who fashion'd the heart, should understand the motions of it, Psal. 33. 13, 15. He looks from Heaven and beholds all the Children of men: he fashioneth their hearts alike, and considers all their Works. Doth any man make a Watch, and yet be ignorant of its motion? Did God fling away the Key to this secret Cabinet, when he framed it, and put off the power of unlocking it when he pleased? He did not surely frame it in such a posture as that any thing in it should be hid from his Eye; he did not fashion it to be Priviledged from his Government; which would follow, if he were ignorant of what was Minted and Coined in it.

He could not be a Judg to punish men, if the inward frames and Principles of mens actions were concealed from him; an outward action may glitter to an outward eye, yet the secret spring be a desire of applause, and not the Fear and Love of God. If the inward frames of the heart did lye covered from him in the secret recesses of the heart; those plausible acts, which in regard of their Principles, would merit a Punishment, would meet with a Reward; and God should bestow Happiness where he had denounced Misery. As without the knowledge of what is just, he could not be a Wise Law-giver; so without the knowledge of what is inwardly committed, he could not be a Righteous Judg; acts that are rotten in the spring, might be judged good by the fair colour and appearance.

This is the glory of God at the last day, to manifest the secrets of all hearts, 1 Cor. 4. 5. and the Prophet Jeremiah links the power of Judging, and the Prerogative of trying the Hearts together, Jer. 11. 20. but thou, O Lord of Hosts, that Judgest Righteously, that tryest the Reins and the Heart: and Jer. 17. 10. I the Lord search the Heart, I try the Reins; to what end? even to give every man according to his way, and according to the fruit of his doings. And indeed his binding up the whole Law with that command of not coveting, evidenceth that he will Judg men by the inward affections and frames of their hearts. Again, God sustains the mind of man in every act of thinking; In him we have not only the Principle of Life, but every motion, the motion of our minds as well as of our members: In him we live and move, &c. Acts 17. 28. Since he supports the vigor of the faculty in every act, can he be ignorant of those acts which spring from the faculty, to which he doth at that instant communicate power and ability?

Now this knowledge of the Thoughts of men is,

1. *An incommunicable Property, belonging only to the Divine Understanding.* Creatures indeed may know the thoughts of others by Divine Revelation, but not by themselves; no Creature hath a Key immediately to open the minds of men, and see all that lodgeth there; no Creature can Fathom the heart by the Line of Created Knowledge\*. Devils may have a conjectural Knowledge, and may guess at them, by the acquaintance they have with the Disposition and Constitution of men, and the Images they behold in their Fancies; and by some marks which an inward



inward imagination may stamp upon the Brain, Blood, Animal Spirits, Face, &c. But the knowing the Thoughts meerly as Thought, without any Impression by it, is a Royalty God appropriates to himself, as the main secret of his Government, and a Perfection declarative of his Deity, as much as any else, *Jer. 17. 9, 10. the heart of man is desperately wicked, who can know it? yes, there is one, and but one, I the Lord search the Heart, I try the Reins. Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks upon the Heart, 1 Sam. 16. 7.* where God is distinguished by this Perfection from all men whatsoever; others may know by Revelation, as *Elisba* did, what was in *Gebazi's heart*, 2 Kings 5. 26. But God knows a man more than any man knows himself; What person upon earth understands the windings and turnings of his own heart, what reserves it will have, what contrivances, what inclinations? all which God knows exactly.

2. *God acquires no new Knowledg of the thoughts and heart, by the Discovery of them in the actions.* He would then be but equal in this part of Knowledg to his Creature; no man or Angel but may thus arrive to the Knowledg of them; God were then excluded from an absolute Dominion over the prime work of his lower Creation; he would have made a Creature superior in this respect to himself, upon whose Will to discover, his knowledg of their inward intentions should depend; and therefore when God is said to search the heart, we must not understand it as if God were ignorant before, and was fain to make an exact scrutiny and enquiry, before he attained what he desired to know; but God condescends to our capacity in the expression of his own Knowledg, signifying that his Knowledg is as compleat as any mans Knowledg can be, of the designs of others, after he hath sifted them by a strict and through examination, and wrung out a discovery of their intentions; that he knows them as perfectly as if he had put them upon the rack, and forced them to make a discovery of their secret Plottings. Nor must we understand that in *Gen. 22. 12.* where God saith, after *Abraham* had stretched out his hand to Sacrifice his Son, *Now I know that thou fearest God*, as though God was ignorant of *Abrahams* gracious disposition to him; did *Abrahams* drawing his Knife, furnish God with a new Knowledg? no, God knew *Abrahams* pious inclinations before, *Gen. 18. 19. I know him that he will command his Children after him, &c.* Knowledg is sometimes taken for approbation; then the sense will be, now I approve this Fact as a Testimony of thy fear of me; since thy affection to thy *Isaac* is extinguish'd by the more powerful flame of affection to my Will and Command; I now accept thee, and count thee a meet subject of my choicest Benefits; or *now I know*, that is, I have made known and manifested the Faith of *Abraham* to himself and to the World. Thus *Paul* uses the word *know*, 1 Cor. 2. 2. *I have determined to know nothing*; that is to declare and teach nothing, to make known nothing but Christ Crucified; or else, *now I know*, that is, I have an evidence and experiment in this noble fact, that thou fearest me. God often condescends to our capacity in speaking of himself after the manner of men, as if he had (as men do) known the inward affections of others by their outward actions.

4. *God knows all the Evils and Sins of Creatures.*

1. *God knows all Sin.* This follows upon the other. If he knows all the actions and thoughts of Creatures, he knows also all the Sinfulness in those acts and thoughts: This *Zophar* infers from Gods punishing men, *Job 11. 11. for he knows vain man, he sees his wickedness also*; he knows every man, and sees the wickedness of every man: *He looks down from Heaven*, and beholds not only the filthy persons, but what is filthy in them\*, all Nations in the World, and every man of every Nation, none of their iniquity is hid from his eyes; *He searches Jerusalem with Candles*, *Jer. 16. 17.* God follows Sinners step by step, with his eye; and will not leave searching out till he hath taken them; a Metaphor taken from one that searches all Chinks with a Candle, that nothing can be hid from him. He knows it distinctly in all the parts of it, how an Adulterer rises out of his Bed to commit Uncleaness, what contrivances he had, what steps he took, every circumstance in the whole progress; not only evil in the bulk, but every one of the blacker spots upon it, which may most aggravate it. If he did not know *Evil*, how could he permit it, order it, punish it or pardon it? Doth he permit he knows not what? Order to his own holy ends what he is ignorant of? Punish or pardon that which he



he is uncertain whether it be a Crime or no? *Cleanse me*, saith *David*, from my secret faults, Ps. 19. 12. secret in regard of others, secret in regard of himself; how could God cleanse him from that whereof he was ignorant? He knows Sins before they are committed, much more when they are in act; he foreknew the Idolatry and Apostacy of the *Jews*; what Gods they would serve, in what measure they would provoke him, and violate his Covenant\*; he knew *Judas* his Sin long before *Judas* his actual existence, foretelling it in the *Psalms*; and Christ predicts it before he acted it. He sees Sins future in his own permitting Will; he sees Sins present in his own supporting act. As he knows things possible to himself, because he knows his own power; so he knows things practicable by the Creature, because he knows the Power and Principles of the Creature\*. This Sentiment of God is naturally writ in the fears of Sinners, upon Lightning, Thunder, or some Prodigious operation of God in the World; what is the Language of them, but that he sees their Deeds, hears their words, knows the inward sinfulness of their hearts; that he doth not only behold them as a meer Spectator, but considers them as a just Judg. And the Poets say, that the Sins of men leapt into Heaven and were writ in Parchments of *Jupiter*\*, *scelus in terram geritur, in caelo scribitur: sin is acted on Earth, and recorded in Heaven.* God indeed doth not behold Evil with the approving eye; he knows it not with a practical knowledg to be the Author of it, but with a speculative Knowvledg, so as to understand the sinfulness of it; or a knowvledg *simplicis intelligentiae*, of simple intelligence, as he permits them, not positively vvills them; he knowvs them not vvith a knowvledg of assent to them, but dissent from them. Evil pertains to a dissenting act of the mind, and an aversive act of the Will; and vvhat tho' evil formally taken, hath no distinct Conception, because it is a privation; a Defect hath no Being, and all knowvledg is by the apprehension of some Being; vvould not this lye as strongly against our ovvn knowvledg of Sin? Sin is a privation of the rectitude due to an act; and vvho doubts mans knowvledg of Sin? by his knowving the act, he knowvs the deficiency of the act; the subject of evil hath a Being, and so hath a conception in the mind; that vvhich hath no Being cannot be knowvn by it self, or in it self; but vvill it follow that it cannot be knowvn by its contrary? as vve knowv darkness to be a privation of light, and folly to be a privation of vvifdom. God knowvs all good by himself, because he is the Sovereign good; Is it strange then, that he should knowv all evil, since all evil is in some natural good?

2. *The manner of Gods knowing Evil, is not so easily known.* And indeed, as vve cannot comprehend the Essence of God, tho' it is easily intelligible that there is such a Being; so vve can as little comprehend the manner of Gods Knowvledg, tho' vve cannot but conclude him to be an intelligent Being, a pure Understanding, knowving all things: As God hath a higher manner of Being than his Creatures, so he hath another and higher manner of knowving; and vve can as little comprehend the manner of his knowving, as vve can the manner of his Being. But as to the manner,

Doth not God knowv his ovvn Lavv, and shall he not knowv hovv much any action comes short of his Rule? he cannot knowv his ovvn Rule vvithout knowving all the deviations from it. He knowvs his ovvn Holiness, and shall he not see hovv any action is contrary to the Holiness of his ovvn nature? Doth not God knowv every thing that is true? and is it not true that this or that is evil? and shall God be ignorant of any Truth? Hovv doth God knowv that he cannot lye, but by knowving his ovvn Veracity? Hovv doth God knowv that he cannot Dye, but by knowving his ovvn Immutability? and by knowving those, he knowvs vvhat a Lye is, he knowvs vvhat Death is; so if Sin never had been, if no Creature had ever been, God vvould have knowvn vvhat Sin vvas, because he knowvs his ovvn Holiness; because he knevv vvhat Lavv vvas fit to be appointed to his Creatures if he should Create them, and that that Lavv might be transgressed by them. God knowvs all good, all goodness in himself; he therefore hath a foundation in himself to knowv all that comes short of that goodness, that is opposite to that Holiness: As if Light vvere capable of Understanding, it vvould knowv Darkness only by knowving it self; by knowving it self, it vvould knowv vvhat is contrary to it self. God knowvs all Created goodness vvhich he hath planted in the Creature; he knowvs then

Deut. 31. 20.  
21.

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oma p. 132.

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Crops. Anthol.  
dec. 1. cap. 395  
p. 101.



then all defects from this goodness, what Perfection an act is deprived of; what is opposite to that goodness, and that is evil. As we know Sickness by Health, Discord by Harmony, Blindness by Sight, because it is a privation of Sight; whosoever knows one contrary knows the other; God knows unrighteousness by the *Idea* which he hath of Righteousness, and sees an act deprived of that rectitude and goodness which ought to be in it; he knows evil because he knows the causes whence evil proceeds\*. A Painter knows a Picture of his own framing, and if any one dashes any base colour upon it, shall not he also know that? God by his hand Painted all Creatures, imprest upon man the fair stamp and colour of his own Image; the Devil defiles it, man daubs it; Doth not God that knows his own Work, know how this Piece is become different from his Work? Doth not God that knows his Creatures goodness, which himself was the Fountain of, know the change of this goodness? Yea, he knew before, that the Devil would sow Tares where he had sown Wheat; and therefore that Controversy of some in the Schools, Whether God knew evil by its opposition to Created or Uncreated goodness, is needless. We may say God knows Sin as it is opposite to Created goodness, yet he knows it radically by his own goodness, because he knows the goodness he hath communicated to the Creature by his own Essential goodness in himself. To conclude this head:

The knowledg of Sin doth not bespot the Holiness of Gods nature; for the bare knowledg of a Crime doth not infect the mind of man with the Filth and Pollution of that Crime; for then every man that knows an act of Murder committed by another, would by that bare knowledg be tainted with his Sin; yea and a Judge that condemns a Malefactor, may as well Condemn himself if this were so: The Knowledg of Sins infects not the understanding that knows them, but only the Will that approves them. 'Tis no discredit to us to know evil, in order to pass a right Judgment upon it; so neither can it be to God.

4. *God knows all future things, all things to come.* The differences of time cannot hinder a knowledg of all things by him, who is before time, above time, that is not measured by hours, or days, or years; If God did not know them, the hindrance must be in himself, or in the things themselves, because they are things to come: Not in himself; If it did, it must arise from some impotency in his own nature, and so we render him weak; or from an unwillingness to know, and so we render him lazy, and an Enemy to his own Perfection; for simply considered, the knowledg of more things is a greater Perfection than the knowledg of a few; and if the knowledg of a thing includes something of Perfection, the ignorance of a thing includes something of Imperfection: The knowledg of future things is a greater Perfection than not to know them, and is accounted among men a great part of Wisdom, which they call fore-sight; 'tis then surely a greater Perfection in God to know future things than to be ignorant of them. And would God rather have something of imperfection than be possessor of all Perfection? Nor doth the hindrance lye in the things themselves, because their futurity depends upon his Will; for as nothing can actually be without his Will, giving it existence; so nothing can be future without his Will, designing the futurity of it. Certainly if God knows all things possible, which he will not do, he must know all things future, which he is not only able, but resolved to do, or resolved to permit. Gods perfect knowledg of himself, that is, of his own infinite Power and concluding Will, necessarily includes a fore-knowledg of what he is able to do, and what he will do.

Again, If God doth not know future things, there was a time when God was ignorant of most things in the World; for before the Deluge he was more ignorant than after; the more things were done in the World, the more Knowledg did accrue to God, and so the more Perfection; then the Understanding of God was not perfect from Eternity, but in Time; nay, is not perfect yet, if he be ignorant of those things which are still to come to pass; he must tarry for a Perfection, he waits till those futurities come to be in act, till those things which are to come, cease to be future, and begin to be present. Either God knows them or desires to know them; if he desires to know them and doth not, there is something wanting to him; all desire speaks an absence of the object desired, and a sentiment of want in the person desiring: If he doth not desire to know them, nay,



if he doth not actually know them, it destroys all Providence, all his Government of Affairs; for his Providence hath a concatenation of means with a prospect of something that is future: As in *Joseph's* Case, who was put into the Pit, and sold to the *Egyptians* in order to his future advancement, and the Preservation both of his Father and his envious Brethren. If God did not know all the future inclinations and actions of men, something might have been done by the Will of *Potiphar*, or by the Free-will of *Pharaoh*, whereby *Joseph* might have been cut short of his advancement, and so God have been interrupted in the track and method of his designed Providences. He that hath decreed to govern man for that end he hath design'd him, knows all the means before, whereby he will govern him; and therefore hath a distinct and certain knowledg of all things; for a confus'd knowledg is an imperfection in Government; 'tis in this the infiniteness of his Understanding is more seen than in knowing things past or present; his eyes are a *flame of fire*, Revel. 1. 14. in regard of the penetrating vertue of them into things impenetrable by any else.

To make it further appear, that God knows all things future, consider,

1. First, *Every thing which is the object of Gods Knowledg without himself, was once only future.* There was a moment when nothing was in Being but himself; he knew nothing actually past, because nothing was past; nothing actually present, because nothing had any existence but himself; therefore only what was future; and why not every thing that is future now, as well as only what was future and to come to pass just at the beginning of the Creation? God indeed knows every thing as present, but the things themselves known by him were not present but future; the whole Creation was once future, or else it was from Eternity; if it begun in time, it was once future in it self, else it could never have begun to be; Did not God know what would be Created by him, before it was Created by him? Did he create he knew not what, and knew not before, what he should Create? Was he ignorant before he acted, and in his acting, what his operation would tend to? or did he not know the nature of things, and the ends of them, till he had produced them, and saw them in Being? Creatures then did not arise from his Knowledg, but his Knowledg from them; he did not then Will that his Creatures should be, for he had then willed what he knew not, and knew not what he willed; they therefore must be known before they were made, and not known because they were made; he knew them to make them, and he did not makethem to know them. By the same reason that he knew what Creatures should be before they were, he knows still what Creatures shall be before they are\*; for all things that are, were in God, not really in their own nature, but in him as a cause; so the Earth and Heavens were in him, as a Model is in the mind of a Work-man, which is in his Mind and Soul, before it be brought forth into outward act.

2. *The Predictions of future things evidence this.* There is not a Prophecy of any thing to come, but is a spark of his fore-knowledg, and bears Witness to the Truth of this assertion, in the punctual accomplishment of it; this is a thing challenged by God as his own peculiar, wherein he surmounts all the *Idols* that mans inventions have Godded in the World, *Isa. 41. 21, 22. Let them bring forth (speaking of the Idols) and shew us what shall happen, or declare us things to come: shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are Gods.* Such a fore-knowledg of things to come, is here ascribed to God by God himself, as a distinction of him from all false Gods; such a Knowledg, that if any could prove that they were possessors of, he would acknowledg them Gods as well as himself; *that we may know that you are Gods*; He puts his Deity to stand or fall upon this account, and this should be the point which should decide the controversy, whether he or the Heathen Idols were the true God; the dispute is managed by this medium. He that knows things to come, is God; I know things to come, ergo, I am God; the Idols know not things to come, therefore they are not Gods; God submits the Being of his Deity to this Tryal. If God know things to come no more than the Heathen Idols, which were either *Devils* or men, he would be in his own account, no more a God than *Devils* or men; no more a God than the *Pagan Idols* he doth scoff at for this defect. If the Heathen Idols were to be stript of their Deity for want of this

\* *Petrus* changed.

*Bradward. lib.*  
3. cap. 14.



this foreknowledg of things to come, would not the true God also fall from the same excellency, if he were defective in Knowledg? he would in his own judgment no more deserve the Title and Character of a God than they. How could he reproach them for that, if it were wanting in himself? It cannot be understood of future things in their causes, when the effects necessarily arise from such causes, as Light from the Sun, and Heat from the Fire; many of these, men know; more of them, Angels and Devils know; if God therefore had not a higher and farther Knowledg than this, he would not by this be proved to be God, any more than Angels and Devils, who know necessary effects in their causes. The Devils indeed did predict some things in the Heathen Oracles; but God is differenced from them here by the infiniteness of his Knowledg, in being able to predict things to come that they knew not, or things in their particularities, things that depended on the liberty of mans Will, which the Devils could lay no claim to a certain knowledg of. Were it only a conjectural knowledg that is here meant, the Devils might answer, they can conjecture, and so their Deity were as good as Gods; for tho' God might know more things, and conjecture nearer to what would be, yet still it would be but conjectural, and therefore not a higher kind of Knowledg than what the Devils might challenge. How much then is God beholden to the *Socinians* for denying the knowledg of all future things to him, upon which here he puts the trial of his Deity? God asserts his knowledg of things to come, as a manifest evidence of his Godhead; those that deny therefore the Argument that proves it, deny the conclusion too; for this will necessarily follow, that if he be God because he knows future things, then he that doth not know future things is not God; and if God knows not future things but only by conjecture, then there is no God; because a certain knowledg so as infallibly to predict things to come, is an inseparable Perfection of the Deity: It was therefore well said of *Austin*, that it was as high a madness to deny God to be, as to deny him the foreknowledg of things to come.

The whole *Prophetick* part of Scripture declares this Perfection of God; every *Prophets* Candle was lighted at this Torch, they could not have this foreknowledg of themselves; Why might not many other men have the same insight, if it were by nature? it must be from some superior Agent; and all Nations owned Prophecy as a Beam from God, a fruit of Divine Illumination: Prophecy must be totally expunged if this be denied; for the subjects of Prophecy are things future; and no man is properly a Prophet, but in Prediction; now Prediction is nothing but foretelling, and things foretold are not yet come; and the foretelling of them, supposeth them not to be yet, but that they shall be in time; several such Predictions we have in Scripture, the event whereof hath been certain. The years of Famine in *Egypt* foretold that he would order second causes for bringing that Judgment upon them; the Captivity of his People in *Babylon*, the calling of the *Gentiles*, the rejection of the *Jews*. *Daniels* Revelation of *Nebuchadnezzars* Dream; that Prince refers to God as the revealer of Secrets, *Dan.* 2. 47. By the same reason that he knows one thing future by himself, and by the infiniteness of his Knowledg before any causes of them appear, he doth know all things future.

3. Some future things are known by men; and we must allow God a greater Knowledg than any Creature. Future things in their Causes may be known by Angels and men, (as I said before); whosoever knows necessary causes, and the efficacy of them, may foretell the effects; and when he sees the meeting and concurrence of several causes together, he may presage what the consequent effect will be of such a concurrence: So Physicians foretel the Progress of a Disease, the increase or diminution of it by natural Signs; and *Astronomers* foretel Eclipses by their observation of the motion of Heavenly Bodies, many years before they happen\*, can they be hid from God, with whom are the reasons of all things\*? an expert Gardener by knowing the Root in the depth of Winter, can tell what Flowers and what Fruit it will bear, and the Month when they will peep out their heads; and shall not God much more that knows the Principles of all his Creatures, and is exactly privy to all their natures and qualities, know what they will be, and what operations shall be from those Principles? Now if God did know things only in their causes,

*Pacuvius* said;  
Siqui quæ e-  
ventura sunt  
provident, aquæ  
parent, Gell.  
lib. 14. c. 1.

*Cusanus.*  
*Fuller's* *Pis.*  
gab 1. 2. p. 281.



his Knowledg would not be more excellent than the knowledg of Angels and men, tho' he might know more than they of the things that will come to pass, from every cause singly, and from the concurrence of many. Now as God is more excellent in Being than his Creature; so he is more excellent in the objects of his Knowledg and the manner of his Knowledg; well then, shall ascertain knowledg of something future, and a conjectural knowledg of many things, be found among men; and shall a determinate and infallible knowledg of things to come, be found no where, in no Being? If the conjecture of future things favours of ignorance, and God knows them only by conjecture, there is then no such thing in Being as a *perfect intelligent Being*, and so no God.

4. *God knows his own Decree and Will, and therefore must needs know all future things.* If any thing be future, or to come to pass, it must be from it self or from God; not from it self, then it would be independent and absolute; if it hath its futurity from God, then God must know what he hath decreed to come to pass; those things that are future in necessary causes, God must know, because he willed them to be causes of such effects; he therefore knows them, because he knows what he willed: The knowledg of God cannot arise from the things themselves, for then the knowledg of God would have a cause without him; and Knowledg, which is an eminent Perfection, would be conferred upon him by his Creatures. But as God sees things possible in the glass of his own power, so he sees things future in the Glass of his own Will; in his effecting Will, if he hath Decreed to produce them; in his permitting Will, as he hath Decreed to suffer them and dispose of them: Nothing can pass out of the rank of things merely possible into the order of things future, before some Act of Gods Will hath passed for its futuration\*.

Chequell.

Coccei sum.  
Theol. p. 50.

Coccei sum.  
Theol. p. 50.

Gamaul in A-  
quin, Part 1.  
q. 14. cap. 3.  
p. 124.

'Tis not from the infiniteness of his own Nature simply considered, that God knows things to be future; for as things are not future because God is infinite (for then all possible things should be future) so neither is any thing known to be future only because God is infinite, but because God hath Decreed it; his declaration of things to come, is founded upon his appointment of things to come\*. In *Isa. 44. 7.* it is said, *and who, as I, shall call and declare it, since I appointed the ancient people and the things that are coming*\*. Nothing is Created or ordered in the World, but what God Decreed to be Created and ordered. God knows his own Decree, and therefore all things which he hath Decreed to exist in time; not the minutest part of the World could have existed without his Will, not an action can be done without his Will; as Life the Principle, so Motion the fruit of that Life, is by and from God; as he decreed Life to this or that thing, so he decreed motion as the effect of Life, and Decreed to exert his Power in concurring with them, for producing effects natural from such causes; for without such a concurrence they could not have acted any thing, or produced any thing; and therefore as for natural things, which we call necessary causes, God foreseeing them all particularly in his own Decree, foresaw also all effects which must necessarily flow from them, because such causes cannot but act when they are furnished with all things necessary for action: He knows his own Decrees, and therefore necessarily knows what he hath Decreed, or else we must say things come to pass whether God will or no; or, that he Wills he knows not what; but this cannot be, for *known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World, Acts 15. 18.* Now this necessarily flows from that Principle first laid down, That God knows himself, since nothing is future without Gods Will; if God did not know future things, he would not know his own Will; for as things possible could not be known by him, unless he knew the fulness of his own Power; so things future could not be known by his Understanding, unless he knew the resolves of his own Will.

Maimonid.  
More Nevoch.  
Part 3. Cap.  
21. p. 393. 394.

Thus the Knowledg of God differs from the Knowledg of men; Gods knowledg of his Works precedes his Works, mans knowledg of Gods works follows his works; just as an Artificers knowledg of a Watch, Instrument or Engine, which he would make, is before his making of it; he knows the motions of it, and the reason of those motions before it is made, because he knows what he hath determin'd to Work; he knows not those motions from the consideration of them after they were made, as the Spectator doth, who by viewing the Instrument after it is made,

guesses



gains a knowledge from the sight and consideration of it, till he understands the reason of the whole; so we know things from the consideration of them after we see them in being, and therefore we know not future things: But Gods Knowledge doth not arise from things because they are, but because he Wills them to be, and therefore he knows every thing that shall be, because it cannot be without his Will, as the Creator and maintainer of all things; knowing his own substance he knows all his Works.

5. *If God did not know all future things, he would be mutable in his Knowledge.* If he did not know all things that ever were or are to be, there would be upon the appearance of every new object, an addition of Light to his Understanding, and therefore such a Change in him, as every new knowledge causes in the mind of a man, or as the Sun works in the World upon its rising every morning, scattering the darkness that was upon the face of the Earth; if he did not know them before they came, he would gain a knowledge by them when they came to pass, which he had not before they were effected; his Knowledge would be new according to the newness of the objects, and multiplied according to the multitude of the objects. If God did not know things to come as perfectly as he knew things present and past, but knew those certainly, and the others doubtfully and conjecturally, he would suffer some Change, and acquire some Perfection in his Knowledge, when those future things should cease to be future, and become present; for he would know it more perfectly when it were present, than he did when it was future, and so there would be a Change from Imperfection to a Perfection; But God is every way immutable.

Besides that Perfection would not arise from the Nature of God, but from the Existence and Presence of the thing; but who will affirm that God acquires any Perfection of Knowledge from his Creatures, any more than he doth of Being? he would not then have had that Knowledge, and consequently that Perfection from Eternity, as he had when he Created the World, and will not have a full Perfection of the Knowledge of his Creature till the end of the World, nor of Immortal Souls, which will certainly act as well as live to Eternity; and so God never was, nor ever will be perfect in Knowledge; for when you have conceived millions of years, wherein Angels and Souls live and act, there is still more coming than you can conceive, wherein they will act. And if God be always changing to Eternity, from Ignorance to Knowledge, as those acts come to be exerted by his Creatures, he will not be perfect in Knowledge, no not to Eternity, but will always be changing from one degree of Knowledge to another; a very unworthy Conceit to entertain of the most Blessed, Perfect and Infinite God!

Hence then it followes that,

1. *God foreknows all his Creatures.* All kinds which he determin'd to make, all particulars that should spring out of every species, the time when they should come forth of the Womb, the manner how, *In thy Book all my Members were written*, Plal. 139. 16. *Members* is not in the Heb. whence some refer *all*, to all living Creatures whatsoever, and all the parts of them which God did foresee; he knew the numbers of Creatures with all their parts, they were written in the Book of his fore-knowledge; the duration of them, how long they shall remain in Being, and act upon the Stage; he knows their strength, the links of one cause with another, and what will follow in all their Circumstances, and the series and combination of effects with their causes.

The duration of every thing is foreknown, because determin'd, *Job 14. 5. seeing his days are determin'd, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass*; bounds are fixed, beyond which none shall reach; he speaks of *days* and *months*, not of *years*, to give us notice of Gods particular foreknowledge of every thing, of every day, month, year, hour of a mans life.

2. *All the acts of his Creatures are foreknown by him.* All natural acts because he knows their causes; voluntary acts I shall speak of afterwards.

3. *This foreknowledge was certain.* For it is an unworthy notion of God to ascribe to him a conjectural Knowledge; if there were only a conjectural knowledge, he could but conjecturally foretell any thing; and then it is possible the events of things



things might be contrary to his Predictions. It would appear then that God were deceived and mistaken, and then there could be no rule of trying things whether they were from God or no; for the Rule God sets down to discern his Words from the Words of false Prophets, is the event and certain accomplishment of what is Predicted. *Dent. 18. 21.* to that question, *How shall we know whether God hath spoken or no?* he answers, *That if the thing doth not come to pass, the Lord hath not spoken.* If his Knowledge of future things were not certain, there were no stability in this Rule, it would fall to the ground: We never yet find God deceiv'd in any Prediction, but the event did answer his fore Revelation; his foreknowledge therefore is certain and infallible. We cannot make God uncertain in his Knowledge, but we must conceive him fluctuating and wavering in his Will; but if his Will be not *Yea* and *Nay*, but *Yea*, his Knowledge is certain, because he doth certainly Will and Resolve.

4. *This foreknowledge was from Eternity.* Seeing he knows things possible in his Power, and things future in his Will; if his Power and Resolves were from Eternity, his Knowledge must be so too; or else we must make him ignorant of his own Power, and ignorant of his own Will from Eternity; and consequently not from Eternity Blessed and Perfect. His knowledge of possible things must run Parallel with his Power, and his Knowledge of future things run Parallel with his Will. If he Willed from Eternity, he knew from Eternity what he Willed; but that he did Will from Eternity, we must grant, unless we would render him changeable, and conceive him to be made in time of not Willing, Willing. The Knowledge God hath in time, was alway one and the same, because his Understanding is his proper Essence, as perfect as his Essence, and of an immutable nature.

\* And indeed the actual existence of a thing is not simply necessary to its being perfectly known; we may see a thing that is past out of Being, when it doth not actually exist; and a Carpenter may know the House he is to Build, before it be built, by the model of it in his own mind; much more we may conceive the same of God whose Decrees were before the Foundation of the World\*; and to be before time was, and to be from Eternity, hath no difference. As God in his Being exceeds all beginning of time, so doth his Knowledge all motions of time.

5. *God foreknows all things as present with him from Eternity.* \* As he knows mutable things with an immutable and firm Knowledge, so he knows future things with a present Knowledge; not that the things which are produced in time, were actually and really present with him in their own Beings from Eternity; for then they could not be produced in time; had they a real existence, then they would not be Creatures, but God; and had they actual Being, then they could not be future, for future speaks a thing to come that is not yet: If things had been actually present with him, and yet future, they had been made before they were made, and had a Being before they had a Being; but they were all present to his Knowledge as if they were in actual Being, because the reason of all things that were to be made, was present with him.

\* The reason of the Will of God that they shall be, was equally Eternal with him, wherein he saw what, and when, and how he would Create things, how he would govern them, to what ends he would direct them. Thus all things are present to Gods Knowledge, tho' in their own nature they may be past or future, not in *esse reali*, but in *esse intelligibili*, objectively; not actually present\*; for as the unchangeableness and infiniteness of Gods Knowledge of changeable and finite things, doth not make the things he knows immutable and infinite, so neither doth the Eternity of his Knowledge, make them actually present with him from Eternity; but all things are present to his Understanding, because he hath at once a view of all successions of times; and his knowledge of future things is as perfect as of present things, or what is past; 'tis not a certain knowledge of present things, and an uncertain knowledge of future; but his knowledge of one is as certain and unerring as his knowledge of the other; \* as a man that beholds a Circle with several lines from the Center, beholds the lines as they are joyned in the Center, beholds them also as they are distant and sever'd from one another, beholds them in their extent and in their point all at once, tho' they may have a great distance from one another.

Camacho in Aquin Part 1.  
q. 14. c. 3. p.  
124.

Eph. 1. 5. and  
in other places.

Gerhard Exerc.  
ch 8. de  
Deo sect. 13.  
p. 303.

Bradwardine l. 3.  
c. 14.

Lornbeck.

Pugio Fidei  
part 1. ch 19.



ther : He saw from the beginning of time to the last minute of it, all things coming out of their causes, marching in their order according to his own appointment ; as a man may see a multitude of Ants, some creeping one way, some another, employ'd in several businesses for their Winter Provision. The eye of God at once runs through the whole Circle of Time ; as the eye of man upon a Tower sees all the Passengers at once, tho' some be past, some under the Tower, some coming at a farther distance : God, saith Job, looks to the end of the earth, and sees under the whole Heaven, Job 28. 24. the Knowledge of God is exprest by sight in Scripture, and futurity to God is the same thing as distance to us ; we can with a Perspective-glass make things that are afar off, appear as if they were near ; and the Sun, so many Thousand miles distant from us, to appear as if it were at the end of the Glass ; Why should then future things be at so great a distance from Gods Knowledge, when things so far from us may be made to approach so near to us ?

God considers all things in his own simple Knowledge, as if they were now acted ; and therefore some have chosen to call the knowledge of things to come, not *prescience* or foreknowledge, but *Knowledge*, because God sees all things in one instant, *scientia nunquam deficientis instantia* \*. Upon this account things that are to come, are set down in Scripture as present, and sometimes as past, *Isa. 9. 6. Unto us a Child is Born*, tho' not yet Born ; so of the Sufferings of Christ, *Isa. 53. 4. &c. he hath born our griefs, he was wounded for our transgressions, he was taken from Prison, &c.* not shall be ; and *Psal. 22. 18. they part my Garments among them*, as if it were present ; all to exprest the certainty of Gods fore-knowledge, as if things were actually present before him.

*Boet. consolat. lib. 5. prof. 6.*

6. *This is proper to God, and incommunicable to any Creature.* Nothing but what is Eternal can know all things that are to come : Suppose a Creature might know things that are to come, after he is in Being ; he cannot know things simply as future, because there were things future before he was in Being. The Devils know not mens hearts, therefore cannot foretel their actions with any certainty ; they may indeed have a knowledge of some things to come, but it is only conjectural, and often mistaken ; as the Devil was in his Predictions among the Heathen, and in his presage of Job's Cursing God to his face upon his pressing Calamities, Job 1. 11. Sometimes indeed they have a certain knowledge of something future by the Revelation of God, when he uses them as Instruments of his Vengeance, or for the Trial of his People, as in the Case of Job, when he gave him a Commission to strip him of his Goods ; or as the Angels have, when he uses them as Instruments of the deliverance of his People.

7. *Tho' this be certain, that God foreknows all things and actions ; yet the manner of his knowing all things before they come, is not so easily resolved.* We must not therefore deny this Perfection in God, because we understand not the manner how he hath the Knowledge of all things : It were unworthy for us to own no more of God than we can perfectly conceive of him ; we should then own no more of him than that he doth exist. *Canst thou, saith Job, by searching, find out God ? canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection ?* Job 11. 7. Do we not see things unknown to inferior Creatures, to be known to our selves ? Irrational Creatures do not apprehend the nature of a man, nor what we conceive of them when we look upon them ; nor do we know what they fancy of us when they look wistly upon us ; for ought as I know, we understand as little the manner of their imaginations, as they do of ours ; and shall we ascribe a darkness in God as to future things, because we are ignorant of them, and of the manner how he should know them \* ? shall we doubt whether God doth certainly know those things which we only conjecture ? as our Power is not the measure of the Power of God, so neither is our Knowledge the Judge of the Knowledge of God, no better nor so well as an irrational nature can be the Judge of our Reason : Do we perfectly know the manner how we know ? shall we therefore deny that we know any thing ? we know we have such a faculty which we call Understanding, but doth any man certainly know what it is ? and because he doth not, shall he deny that which is plain and evident to him ? Because we cannot ascertain our selves of the causes of the ebbing and flowing of the Sea, of the man-

*Ficino in Procl. cap. 19.*

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ner how Minerals are ingendred in the Earth, shall we therefore deny that which our eyes convince us of?

And this will be a preparation to the last thing.

5. *God knows all future contingencies*, that is, *God knows all things that shall accidentally happen*, or as we say, *by Chance*; and he knows all the free motions of mens Wills that shall be to the end of the World.

If all things be open to him, *Heb. 4. 13.* then all contingencies are, for they are in the number of things; and as, according to Christs speech, those things that are impossible to man, are possible to God; so those things which are unknown to man, are known to God; because of the infinite fulness and perfection of the Divine Understanding.

Let us see what a Contingent is.

That is *contingent* which we commonly call accidental, as when a Tile falls suddenly upon a mans head as he is walking in the Street; or when one letting off a Musket at random, shoots another he did not intend to hit; such was that Arrow <sup>1 Kings 22 39.</sup> whereby *Ahab* was killed, shot by a Soldier at a *venture*\*, this some call a mixt contingent, made up partly of necessity, and partly of accident; 'tis necessary the Bullet, when sent out of the Gun, or Arrow out of the Bow, should fly and light somewhere, but it is an accident that it hits this or that man, that was never intended by the Archer. Other things, as voluntary actions, are purely contingents, and have nothing of necessity in them; all free actions that depend upon the Will of man, whether to do, or not to do, are of this nature, because they depend not upon a necessary cause, as burning doth upon the Fire, moistning upon Water, or as descent or falling down is necessary to a heavy Body; for those cannot in their own nature do otherwise; but the other actions depend upon a free Agent, able to turn to this or that point, and determine himself as he pleases.

Now we must know, that what is accidental in regard of the Creature, is not so in regard of God; the manner of *Ahab's* Death was accidental, in regard of the hand by which he was slain, but not in regard of God who foretold his Death, and foreknew the Shot, and directed the Arrow; God was not uncertain before of the manner of his fall, nor hovered over the Battel to watch for an opportunity to accomplish his own Prediction; what may be or not be, in regard of us, is certain in regard of God; to imagine that what is accidental to us, is so to God, is to measure God by our short line. How many events following upon the results of Princes in their Counsels, seem to persons ignorant of those Counsels to be a hap-hazard, yet were not contingencies to the Prince and his assistants, but foreseen by him as certainly to issue so as they do, which they knew before would be the fruit of such causes and instruments they would knit together? That may be necessary in regard of Gods foreknowledg, which is meerly accidental in regard of the natural disposition of the immediate causes, which do actually produce it; Contingent in its own nature, and in regard of us; but fixed in the Knowledg of God: \* *One* illustrates it by this *similitude*: A Master sends two Servants to one and the same place, two several ways, unknown to one another; they meet at the place which their Master had appointed them; their meeting is accidental to them, one knows not of the other, but it was foreseen by the Master that they should so meet, and that in regard of them it would seem a meer accident, till they came to explain the business to one another: Both the necessity of their meeting in regard of their Masters Order, and the accidentalness of it in regard of themselves, were in both their circumstances foreknowvn by the Master that employ'd them.

\* *Zanch.*

For the clearing of this, take it in this method.

1. 'Tis an unworthy conceit of God in any to exclude him from the knowledg of these things.

1. It will be a strange contracting of him, to allow him no greater a Knowledg than we have our selves.

Contingencies are knowvn to us vvhhen they come into act, and pass from futurity to reality; and vvhhen they are present to us, vve can order our affairs accordingly; shall vve allow God no greater a measure of Knowledg than vve have, and make him as blind as our selves, not to see things of that nature before they come

to



to pass? Shall God know them no more? Shall we imagine God knows no other-wise than we know? and that he doth, like us, stand gazing with admiration at events? man can conjecture many things; is it fit to ascribe the same uncertainty to God; as tho' he, as well as we, could have no assurance till the issue appear in the view of all? If God doth not certainly foreknow them, he doth but conjecture them; but a conjectural knowledge is by no means to be fastned on God; for that is not knowledge but guess, and destroys a Deity by making him subject to mistake; for he that only guesseth, may guess wrong; so that this is to make God like our selves, and strip him of an universally acknowledged Perfection of Omniscience. A conjectural Knowledge, saith one \*, is as unworthy of God, as the Creature is unworthy of Omniscience. 'Tis certain, man hath a liberty to act many things this or that way as he pleases; to walk to this or that quarter, to speak or not to speak, to do this or that thing, or not to do it; which way a man will certainly determine himself, is unknown before to any Creature, yea often at the present to himself, for he may be in suspense; but shall we imagine this future determination of himself is concealed from God? Those that deny Gods foreknowledge in such cases, must either say, that God hath an opinion that a man will resolve rather this way than that; but then if a man by his liberty determine himself contrary to the opinion of God, is not God then deceived? and what rational Creature can own him for a God that can be deceived in any thing? or else they must say that God is at uncertainty, and suspends his Opinion without determining it any way; then he cannot know free acts till they are done; he would then depend upon the Creature for his information; his knowledge would be every instant increased, as things, he knew not before, came into act; and since there are every minute an innumerable multitude of various imaginations in the minds of men, there would be every minute an accession of new Knowledge to God which he had not before; besides, this knowledge would be mutable according to the Wavering and Weathercock resolutions of men, one while standing to this point, another while to that, if he depended upon the Creatures determination for his knowledge.

2. *If the free acts of men were unknown before to God, no man can see how there can be any Government of the World by him.* Such contingencies may happen, and such resolves of mens Free-Will unknown to God, as may perplex his affairs, and put him upon new Councils and methods for attaining those ends which he settled at the first Creation of things; if things happen which God knows not of before, this must be the consequence; where there is no Fore-sight, there is no Providence; things may happen so sudden, if God be ignorant of them, that they may give a check to his intentions and Scheme of Government, and put him upon changing the whole model of it. How often doth a small intervening circumstance, unforeseen by man, dash in pieces a long meditated and well-formed Design? To govern necessary causes as Sun and Stars, whose effects are natural and constant in themselves, is easy to be imagin'd; but how to govern the World that consists of so many men of Free-Will, able to determine themselves to this or that, and which have no constancy in themselves, as the Sun and Stars have, cannot be imagin'd, unless we will allow in God as great a certainty of foreknowledge of the designs and actions of men, as there is inconstancy in their resolves: God must be altering the methods of his Government every day, every hour, every minute, according to the determinations of men, which are so various and changeable in the whole compass of the World in the space of one minute; he must wait to see what the counsels of men will be, before he could settle his own methods of Government; and so must govern the World according to their mutability, and not according to any certainty in himself. But his counsel is stable in the midst of multitudes of free devices in the heart of man, *Prov. 19. 21.* and knowing them all before, orders them to be subservient to his own stable counsel. If he cannot know what to morrow will bring forth in the mind of a man, how can he certainly settle his own determination of Governing him? his Decrees and Resolves must be Temporal, and arise *pro re nata*, and he must always be in counsel what he should do upon every change of mens minds. This is an unworthy conceit of the Infinite Majesty of Heaven, to make his Government depend upon the resolves of men, rather than their resolves upon the design of God.



2. 'Tis therefore certain, that God doth foreknow the free and voluntary acts of man. How could he else order his People to ask of him things to come, in order to their deliverance, such things as depended upon the Will of man, if he foreknew not the motions of their Will? *Isa.* 45. 11.

1. *Actions good or indifferent depending upon the liberty of mans Will as much as any whatsoever.* Several of these he hath foretold; Not only a Person to build up *Jerusalem* was Predicted by him, but the Name of that person, *Cyrus*, *Isa.* 44. 28. What is more contingent, or is more the effect of the liberty of mans Will, than the Names of their Children? Was not the Destruction of the *Babylonish* Empire foretold, which *Cyrus* undertook, not by any compulsion, but by a free inclination and resolve of his own Will? And was not the dismissal of the *Jews* into their own Country, a voluntary act in that Conqueror? if you consider the liberty of mans Will, might not *Cyrus* as well have continued their Yoke, as have struck off their Chains, and kept them Captive as well as dismiss them? Had it not been for his own interest, rather to have strengthened the Fetters of so turbulent a People, who being tenacious of their Religion and Laws different from that profest by the whole World, were like to make disturbances more when they were linkt in a body in their own Country, than when they were transplanted and scatter'd into the several parts of his Empire; It was in the power of *Cyrus*, (take him as a man) to chuse one or the other; his interest invited him to continue their Captivity, rather than grant their Deliverance; yet God knew that he would willingly do this rather than the other; he knew this which depended upon the Will of *Cyrus*; and why may not an infinite God foreknow the free acts of all men, as well as of one? If the liberty of *Cyrus's* Will was no hinderance to Gods certain and infallible foreknowledge of it, how can the contingency of any other thing be a hinderance to him? for there is the same reason of one and all; and his Government extends to every Village, every Family, every Person, as well as to Kingdoms and Nations.

So God foretold by his *Prophet*, not only the destruction of *Jeroboams* Altar, but the Name of the Person that should be the Instrument of it, *1 Kings* 13. 2. and this about 300 years before *Josiah's* Birth. 'Tis a wonder that none of the Pious Kings of *Judah* in detestation of Idolatry, and hopes to recover again the Kingdom of *Israel*, had in all that space Named one of their Sons by that Name of *Josiah*, in hopes that that Prophecy should be accomplisht by him: That *Manasseh* only should do this, who was the greatest imitator of *Jeroboams* Idolatry among all the *Jewish* Kings, and indeed went beyond them; and had no mind to destroy in another Kingdom what he propagated in his own. What is freer than the imposition of a Name, yet this he foreknew, and this *Josiah* was *Manasses's* Son, *2 Kings* 21. 26. Was there any thing more voluntary than for *Pharaoh* to Honour the Butler by restoring him to his place, and punish the Baker by hanging him on a Gibbet? yet this was foretold, *Gen.* 40. 8. And were not all the voluntary acts of men, which were the means of *Joseph's* advancement, foreknown by God, as well as his exaltation, which was the end he aimed at by those means? Many of these may be reckon'd up.

Can all the free acts of man surmount the infinite capacity of the Divine Understanding? If God singles out one voluntary action in man as contingent as any, and lying among a vast number of other designs and resolutions, both antecedent and subsequent; Why should he not know the whole mass of mens thoughts and actions, and pierce into all that the liberty of mans Will can effect? Why should he not know every grain, as well as one that lies in the midst of many of the same kind?

And since the *Scripture* gives so large an account of contingents, predicted by God; no man can certainly prove that any thing is un-foreknown to him. 'Tis as reasonable to think he knows every contingent; as that he knows some that lye as much hid from the eye of any Creature, since there is no more difficulty to an infinite understanding to know all, than to know some\*. Indeed if we deny Gods

\* The Stoicks  
thought

their Souls to be some particle of God. *Aποσπασματα*, pieces pull'd off from him; did conclude from thence that he knew all the motions of their Souls as his own mover, as things coherent with him. *Arrian Epictet. lib. 1. cap. 14. p. 60.*



foreknowledg of the voluntary actions of men, we must strike our selves off from the belief of Scripture-Predictions, that yet remain unaccomplisht, and will be brought about by the voluntary engagements of men, as the ruine of *Antichrist*, &c. If God foreknows not the secret motions of mans Will, how can he foretel them? if we strip him of this Perfection of Prescience, why should we believe a word of Scripture-Predictions? all the Credit of the Word of God is torn up by the Roots. If God were uncertain of such events, how can we reconcile Gods declaration of them to his Truth; and his demanding our Belief of them, to his Goodness? Were it good and righteous in God to urge us to the Beleif of that he were uncertain of himself? how could he be True in Predicting things he were not sure of? or Good, in requiring credit to be given to that which might be false? This would necessarily follow, if God did not foreknow the motions of mens Wills, whereby many of his Predictions were fulfilled, and some remain yet to be accomplisht.

2. *God foreknows the voluntary sinful motions of mens Wills.*

1. *God hath foretold several of them.* Were not all the minute sinful circumstances about the Death of our Blessed Redeemer, as the piercing him, giving him Gall to Drink, foretold, as well as the not breaking his Bones, and parting his Garments? What were those but the free actions of men, which they did willingly without any constraint? And those foretold by *David*, *Isaiah* and other *Prophets*, some above a thousand, some eight hundred, and some more, some fewer years, before they came to pass; and the events punctually answered the Prophecies. Many sinful acts of men, which depended upon their Free-Will, have been foretold: The *Egyptians* voluntary oppressing *Israel*, Gen. 15. 13. *Pharaoh's* hardening his heart against the Voice of *Moses*, Exod. 3. 19. That *Isaiah's* Message would be in vain to the People, *Isa.* 6. 9. that the *Israelites* would be rebellious after *Moses* his Death, and turn Idolaters, *Dent.* 31. 16. *Judas* his betraying of our *Saviour*, a voluntary action, *John* 6. ult. he was not forced to do what he did, for he had some kind of Repentance for it; and not violence, but voluntariness falls under repentance.

2. *His Truth hath depended upon this fore-sight.* Let us consider that in *Gen.* 5. 16. but the fourth Generation they shall come hither again; that is, the Posterity of *Abraham* shall come into *Canaan*; for the iniquity of the *Amorites* is not yet full\*. God makes a Promise to *Abraham*, of giving his Posterity the Land of *Canaan*, not presently, but in the fourth Generation; if the Truth of God be infallible in the performance of his Promise, his Understanding is as infallible in the foresight of the *Amorites* sin; the fulness of their iniquity was to precede the *Israelites* Possession. Did the Truth of God depend upon an uncertainty? did he make the Promise hand over head (as we say)? How could he with any Wisdom and Truth assure *Israel* of the Possession of the Land in the fourth Generation, if he had not been sure that the *Amorites* would fill up the measure of their Iniquities by that time? If *Abraham* had been a *Socinian*, to deny Gods Knowledge of the free acts of men, had he not had a fine excuse for unbelief? What would his reply have been to God? Alas, Lord, this is not a Promise to be relied upon, the *Amorites* iniquity depends upon the acts of their Free-Will, and such thou canst have no Knowledge of; thou canst see no more than a likelihood of their iniquity being full, and therefore there is but a likelihood of thy performing thy Promise, and not a certainty: Would not this be judged not only a sawcy, but a Blasphemous Answer? And upon these Principles the Truth of the most faithful God had been dasht to uncertainty and a peradventure.

3. *God provided a remedy for mans Sin, and therefore foresaw the entrance of it into the World by the fall of Adam.* He had a Decree before the Foundation of the World, to manifest his Wisdom in the Gospel by *Jesus Christ*, an Eternal purpose in *Jesus Christ*, *Eph.* 3. 11. and a Decree of Election past before the foundation of the World; a separation of some to redemption, and forgiveness of Sin in the Blood of *Christ*, in whom they were from Eternity chosen, as well as in time accepted in *Christ*, *Eph.* 1. 4, 6, 7. which is called a purpose in himself, v. 9. had not Sin entred, there had been no occasion for the Death of the Son of God, it being every where in Scripture laid upon that score; a Decree for the shedding of Blood, supposed a Decree for the Permission

Vid *River.* id.  
loc. exerci 26.  
P. 329.



*Maref. cont.*  
Volkel. lib. 1.  
cap. 24. p. 343.

*Amrall. de*  
*Prædestin.*  
cap. 6.

of Sin, and a certain foreknowledg of God, that it would be committed by man. An uncertainty of foreknowledg, and a fixedness of purpose, are not consistent in a wise man, much less in the only Wise God. Gods purpose to manifest his Wisdom to men and Angels in this way, might have been defeated, had God had only a conjectural foreknowledg of the fall of man; and all those solemn purposes of displaying his Perfections in those methods had been to no purpose\*; the Provision of a remedy suppos'd a certainty of the Disease: If a *Sparrow* fall not to the ground without the Will of God, how much less could such a Deplorable ruine fall upon mankind, without Gods Will permitting it, and his Knowledg foreseeing it?

'Tis not hard to conceive how God might foreknow it; \* he indeed decreed to Create man in an excellent State; the goodness of God could not but furnish him with a Power to stand; yet in his Wisdom he might foresee, that the Devil would be envious to mans happiness, and would out of Envy attempt his subversion. As God knew of what temper the faculties were he had endued man with, and how far they were able to endure the assaults of a Temptation; so he also foreknew the grand subtilty of *Satan*, how he would lay his Mine, and to what Point he would drive his Temptation; how he would propose and manage it, and direct his Battery against the sensitive appetite, and assault the weakest part of the Fort; might he not foresee that the efficacy of the Temptation would exceed the measure of the resistance? cannot God know how far the malice of *Satan* would extend, what *Shots* he would according to his nature use, how high he would charge his Temptation without his powerful restraint, as well as an Engineer judg how many shots of a Cannon will make a breach in a Town, and how many Casks of Powder will blow up a Fortress, who never yet built the one nor founded the other? We may easily conclude God could not be deceived in the Judgment of the issue and event, since he knew how far he would let *Satan* loose, how far he would permit man to act; and since he dives to the bottom of the nature of all things, he foresaw that *Adam* was endued with an ability to stand; as he foresaw that *Benbadad* might naturally recover of his Disease; but he foresaw also that *Adam* would sink under the allurements of the Temptation, as he foresaw that *Hazael* would not let *Benbadad* live, 2 Kings 8. 10.

Now since the whole race of mankind lies in Corruption, and is subject to the power of the Devil, 1 John 3. 18. may not God that knows that corruption in every mans nature, and the force of every mans spirit, and what every particular nature will encline him to upon such objects proposed to him, and what the reasons of the Temptation will be, know also the issues? is there any difficulty in Gods foreknowing this, since man knowing the nature of one he is well acquainted with, can conclude what sentiments he will have, and how he will behave himself upon presenting this or that object to him?

If a man that understands the disposition of his Child or Servant, knows before what he will do upon such an occasion; may not God much more, who knows the inclinations of all his Creatures, and from Eternity run with his eyes over all the works he intended? Our Wills are in the number of causes; and since God knows our Wills, as causes, better than we do our selves, why should he be ignorant of the effects?

God determines to give Grace to such a man; not to give it to another, but leave him to himself, and suffer such temptations to assault him; now God knowing the corruption of man in the whole mass, and in every part of it; is it not easy for him to foreknow what the future actions of the Will will be, when the Tinder and Fire meet together, and how such a man will determine himself both as to the substance and manner of the action? Is it not easy for him to know, how a corrupted Temper and a Temptation will suit? God is exactly privy to all the gall in the hearts of men, and what Principles they will have, before they have a Being. He knows their thoughts afar off, Psal. 139. 2. as far off as Eternity, as some explain the words; and thoughts are as voluntary as any thing; he knows the power and inclinations of men in the order of second causes; he understands the corruption of men, as well as the Poyson of Dragons, and the Venom of Asps; this is laid up in store with him and sealed among his Treasures, Deut. 32. 33, 34. Among the Treasures of his foreknowledg, say some.

What



What was the cruelty of *Hazael*, but a free act? yet God knew the frame of his heart, and what acts of murder and oppression would spring from that bitter fountain, before *Hazael* had conceived them in himself, 2 *Kings* 8. 12. as a man that knows the Mineral through which Waters pass, may know what relish they will have before they appear above the earth; so our *Saviour* knew how *Peter* would deny him; he knew what quantity of Powder would serve for such a Battery, in what measure he would let loose *Satan*, how far he would leave the Reins in *Peters* hands, and then the issue might easily be known; and so in every act of man, God knows in his own Will what measure of Grace he will give, to determine the Will to good, and what measure of Grace he will withdraw from such a person, or not give to him; and consequently, how far such a person will fall or not. God knows the inclinations of the Creature; he knows his own Permissions, what degrees of Grace he will either allow him or, keep from him, according to which will be the degree of his Sin. This may in some measure help our Conceptions in this, tho', as was said before, the manner of Gods foreknowledg is not so easily explicable.

3. *Gods foreknowledg of mans voluntary actions doth not necessitate the Will of man.* The foreknowledg of God is not deceived, nor the liberty of mans Will diminished. I shall not trouble you with any *School distinctions*, but be as plain as I can, laying down several Propositions in this case.

*Proposition 1.* 'Tis certain all necessity doth not take away liberty. Indeed a compulsive necessity takes away liberty; but a necessity of immutability removes not liberty from God; why should then a necessity of Infallibility in God remove liberty from the Creature? God did necessarily create the World, because he Decreed it; yet freely, because his Will from Eternity stood to it; he freely Decreed it, and freely created it; as the *Apostle* saith in regard of Gods Decrees, who hath been his Councillor? *Rom.* 11. 34. so in regard of his actions I may say, who hath been his compeller? he freely decreed, and he freely created. *Jesus Christ* necessarily took our flesh, because he had covenanted with God so to do, yet he acted freely and voluntarily according to that Covenant, otherwise his Death had not been efficacious for us. A good man doth naturally, necessarily love his Children, yet voluntarily: 'Tis part of the happiness of the Blessed, to love God unchangeably, yet freely, for it would not be their happiness if it were done by compulsion. What is done by force, cannot be called felicity, because there is no delight or complacency in it; and tho' the Blessed love God freely, yet if there were a possibility of change, it would not be their Happiness, their Blessedness would be dampt by their fear of falling from this Love, and consequently from their nearness to God, in whom their happiness consists: God foreknows that they will Love him for ever; but are they therefore compell'd for ever to love him? If there were such a kind of constraint, Heaven would be rendered burdensome to them, and so no Heaven.

Again, Gods foreknowledg of what he will do, doth not necessitate him to do: he foreknew that he would create a World, yet he freely created a World. Gods foreknowledg doth not necessitate himself, why should it necessitate us more than himself? We may instance in our selves: When we Will a thing, we necessarily use our faculty of Will; and when we freely Will any thing, 'tis necessary that we freely Will; but this necessity doth not exclude but include liberty; or more plainly, when a man writes or speaks, whilst he writes or speaks, those actions are necessary, because to speak and be silent, to write and not to write at the same time, are impossible; yet our writing or speaking doth not take away the power, not to write or to be silent at that time if a man would be so; for he might have chose whether he would have spoke or writ. So there is a necessity of such actions of man which God foresees; that is, a necessity of infallibility, because God cannot be deceived; but not a coactive necessity, as if they were compelled by God to act thus or thus.

2. *No man can say in any of his voluntary actions that he ever found any force upon him.* When any of us have done any thing according to our Wills, can we say we could not have done the contrary to it? were we determin'd to it in our



our own intrinsic nature, or did we not determine our selves? Did we not act either according to our reason, or according to outward allurements; did we find any thing without us or within us, that did force our Wills to the embracing this or that? Whatever action you do, you do it because you judge it fit to be done; or because you will do it. What tho' God foresaw that you would do so, and that you would do this or that, did you feel any force upon you? did you not act according to your nature? God foresees that you will Eat or Walk at such a time; do you find any thing that moves you to Eat, but your own appetite? or to Walk, but your own Reason and Will? If *Prescience* had impos'd any necessity upon man, should we not probably have found some kind of Plea from it in the mouth of *Adam*? he knew as much as any man ever since knew of the nature of God, as discoverable in Creation; he could not in Innocence fancy an ignorant God, a God that knew nothing of future things; he could not be so ignorant of his own action, but he must have perceived a force upon his Will, had there been any; had he thought that Gods *Prescience* impos'd any necessity upon him, he would not have omitted the Plea, especially when he was so daring as to charge the Providence of God in the *Gift of the Woman* to him, to be the cause of his Crime, *Gen. 3. 12.* How come his Posterity to invent new charges against God, which their Father *Adam* never thought of, who had more knowledg than all of them? He could find no cause of his Sin but the liberty of his own Will; he charges it not upon any necessity from the Devil or any necessity from God; nor doth he alledge the gift of the Woman as a necessary cause of his Sin, but an occasion of it, by giving the Fruit to him. *Judas* knew that our *Saviour* did foreknow his Treachery, for he had told him of it in the hearing of his Disciples, *John 13. 21. 26.* yet he never charg'd the necessity of his Crime upon the foreknowledg of his Master; if *Judas* had not done it freely, he had had no reason to repent of it; his Repentance justifies Christ from imposing any necessity upon him by that foreknowledg. No man acts any thing, but he can give an account of the motives of his action; he cannot father it upon a blind necessity; the Will cannot be compelled, for then it would cease to be Will: God doth not root up the foundations of Nature, or change the order of it, and make men unable to act like men, that is, as free Agents. God foreknows the actions of irrational Creatures, this concludes no violence upon their nature; for we find their actions to be according to their nature, and spontaneous.

3. *Gods foreknowledg is not (simply considered) the cause of any thing.* It puts nothing into things, but only beholds them as present, and arising from their proper causes: The knowledg of God is not the Principle of things, or the cause of their existence, but directive of the action; nothing is because God knows it, but because God Wills it, either positively or permissively; God knows all things possible, yet because God knows them, they are not brought into actual existence, but remain still only as things possible; Knowledg only apprehends a thing, but acts nothing; 'tis the rule of acting, but not the cause of acting; the Will is the immediate Principle, and the Power the immediate cause; to know a thing, is not to do a thing, for then we may be said to do every thing that we know; But every man knows those things which he never did, nor never will do; Knowledg in it self is an apprehension of a thing, and is not the cause of it. A Spectator of a thing is not the cause of that thing which he sees, that is, he is not the cause of it as he beholds it: We see a man Write, we know before that he will Write at such a time; but this foreknowledg is not the cause of his Writing. We see a man Walk, but our vision of him brings no necessity of Walking upon him; he was free to Walk, or not to Walk \*. We foreknow that Death will seize upon all men, we foreknow that the Seasons of the Year will succeed one another; yet is not our foreknowledg the cause of this succession of Spring after Winter, or of the Death of all men, or any man: We see one man fighting with another, our sight is not the cause of that contest, but some Quarrel among themselves exciting their own Passions. As the knowledg of present things imposeth no necessity upon them while they are acting and present; so the know-



Knowledg of future things imposeth no necessity upon them while they are coming. We are certain there will be men in the World to morrow, and that the Sea will Ebb and Flow; but is this knowledg of ours the cause that those things will be so? I know that the Sun will rise to morrow, 'tis true that it shall rise; but 'tis not true, that my foreknowledg makes it to rise. If a Physician Prognosticates upon seeing the Intemperances and Debaucheries of men, that they will fall into such a distemper, is his Prognostication any cause of their Disease, or of the sharpness of any Symptoms attending it? The Prophet foretold the cruelty of *Hazael*, before he committed it; but who will say, that the Prophet was the cause of his Commission of that evil? And thus the foreknowledg of God takes not away the liberty of mans Will, no more than a foreknowledg that we have of any mans actions, takes away his liberty: We may upon our knowledg of the temper of a man, certainly foreknow, that if he falls into such Company, and get among his Cups, he will be Drunk; but is this foreknowledg the cause that he is Drunk? no, the cause is the liberty of his own Will, and not resisting the Temptation. God purposes to leave such a man to himself and his own ways; and man being so left, God foreknows what will be done by him according to that corrupt nature which is in him; tho' the Decree of God of leaving a man to the liberty of his own Will be certain, yet the liberty of mans Will as thus left, is the cause of all the extravagancies he doth commit. Suppose *Adam* had stood, would not God certainly have foreseen that he would have stood? yet it would have been concluded that *Adam* had stood, not by any necessity of Gods foreknowledg, but by the liberty of his own Will: Why should then the foreknowledg of God add more necessity to his falling than to his standing? \* And though it be said sometimes in Scripture, that such a thing was done *that the Scripture might be fulfilled*, as John 12. 38. *that the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled, Lord who hath believed our report?* the word *That*, doth not infer that the Prediction of the Prophet was the cause of the *Jews* unbelief, but infers this, that the Prediction was manifested to be true by their unbelief, and the event answered the Prediction; this Prediction was not the cause of their Sin, but their foreseen Sin was the cause of this Prediction; and so the Particle *That*, is taken, *Psal. 51. 6. against thee, thee only have I sinned, that thou mightest be justified, &c.* the justifying God, was not the end and intent of the Sin, but the event of it upon his acknowledgment.

\* *Riser in III.*  
53. l. p. 16.

4. God foreknows things, because they will come to pass; but things are not future, because God knows them. Foreknowledg presupposeth the object which is foreknown; a thing that is to come to pass, is the object of the Divine Knowledg, but not the cause of the act of Divine Knowledg; and though the foreknowledg of God doth in Eternity precede the actual presence of a thing which is foreseen as future; yet the future thing in regard of its futurity, is as Eternal as the foreknowledg of God: As the Voice is uttered before it be heard, and a thing is visible before it be seen, and a thing knowable before it be known. But how comes it to be knowable to God? it must be answered, either in the Power of God as a thing possible, or in the Will of God as a thing future; he first Willed, and then knew what he Willed; he knew what he Willed to effect, and he knew what he Willed to permit; as he Willed the Death of Christ by a determinate Counsel, and Willed the Permission of the *Jews* Sin, and the ordering of the malice of their nature to that end, *Acts 2. 22.* God decrees to make a rational Creature, and to govern him by a Law; God Decrees not to hinder this rational Creature from transgressing his Law; and God foresees that what he would not hinder, would come to pass. Man did not Sin because God foresaw him; but God foresaw him to Sin, because man would Sin. If *Adam* and other men would have acted otherwise, God would have foreknown that they would have acted well; God foresaw our actions because they would so come to pass by the motion of our Free-Will, which he would permit, which he would concur with, which he would order to his own holy and glorious ends, for the  
ma-



manifestation of the Perfection of his nature. If I see a man lye in a Sink, no necessity is inferred upon him from my sight to lye in that filthy place, but there is a necessity infer'd by him that lies there, that I should see him in that condition if I pass by, and cast my eye that way.

5. *God did not only foreknow our actions, but the manner of our actions.* That is, he did not only know that we would do such actions, but that we would do them freely; he foresaw that the Will would freely determine it self to this or that; the Knowledg of God takes not away the nature of things; though God knows possible things, yet they remain in the nature of possibility; and tho' God knows contingent things, yet they remain in the nature of contingencies; and tho' God knows free Agents, yet they remain in the nature of liberty: God did not foreknow the actions of man, as necessary, but as free; so that liberty is rather established by this foreknowledg, than removed: God did not foreknow that *Adam* had not a power to stand, or that any man hath not a power to omit such a sinful action, but that he would not omit it. Man hath a power to do otherwise than that which God foreknows he will do: *Adam* was not determin'd by any inward necessity to Fall, nor any man by any inward necessity to commit this or that particular Sin; but God foresaw that he would Fall, and Fall freely; for he saw the whole Circle of means and causes whereby such and such actions should be produced; and can be no more ignorant of the motions of our Will, and the manner of them, than an Artificer can be ignorant of the motions of his Watch, and how far the Spring will let down the String in the space of an hour; he sees all causes leading to such events in their whole order, and how the Free-Will of man will comply with this, or refuse that; he changes not the manner of the Creatures operation, whatsoever it be.

6. *But what if the foreknowledg of God, and the liberty of the Will, cannot be fully reconciled by man? shall we therefore deny a Perfection in God to support a liberty in our selves?* Shall we rather fasten ignorance upon God, and accuse him of blindness, to maintain our liberty? That God doth foreknow every thing, and yet that there is liberty in the rational Creature, are both certain; but how fully to reconcile them, may surmount the Understanding of man. Some Truths the Disciples were not capable of bearing in the days of Christ; and several Truths our understandings cannot reach as long as the World doth last; yet in the mean time we must on the one hand take heed of conceiving God ignorant, and on the other hand of imagining the Creature necessitated; the one will render God imperfect, and the other will seem to render him unjust, in punishing man for that Sin which he could not avoid, but was brought into by a fatal necessity. God is sufficient to render a reason of his ovvn Proceedings, and clear up all at the day of Judgment; 'tis a part of mans curiosity, since the Fall, to be prying into Gods Secrets, things too high for him; vvh whereby he singes his ovvn Wings, and confounds his ovvn Understanding. 'Tis a cursed affectation that runs in the Blood of *Adams* Posterity, to know as God, tho' our first Father smarted and ruin'd his Posterity in that attempt; the vvays and knowvledg of God are as much above our thoughts and conceptions, as the heavens are above the earth, Isa. 55. 9. \*and so sublime, that vve cannot comprehend them in their true and just greatness; his designs are so mysterious, and the vvays of his conduct so profound, that it is not possible to dive into them: The force of our understandings is belovv his infinite Wisdom, and therefore vve should adore him vvith an humble astonishment, and cry out vvith the Apostle, *Rom. 11. 33. Oh the depth of the Riches of the Wisdom and Knowledg of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments! and his ways past finding out!* When ever vve meet vvith depths that vve cannot fathom, let us remember that he is God, and vve his Creatures; and not be guilty of so great extravagance, as to think that a Subject can pierce into all the secrets of a Prince, or a Work understand all the operations of the Artificer. Let us only resolve not to fasten any thing on God that is unvvorthy of the Perfection of his nature, and dishonourable to the Glory of his Majesty; nor imagine that vve can ever step out of the rank of Creatures to the glory of the Deity, to understand fully every thing in his nature.

So much for the second general, What God knowvs.

III. The third is, *How God knows all things?* As it is necessary vve should conceive



ceive God to be an Understanding Being, else he could not be God; so we must conceive his understanding to be infinitely more pure and perfect than ours in the act of it, else we liken him to our selves, and debase him as low as his Foot-stool.

\* As among Creatures there are degrees of Being and Perfection; Plants above Earth and Sand, because they have a Power of growth; Beasts above Plants, because to their Power of growth, there is an addition of excellency of sense; rational Creatures above Beasts, because to Sense there is added the Dignity of Reason: The Understanding of man is more noble than all the vegetative power of Plants, or the sensitive Power of Beasts: God therefore must be infinitely more excellent in his Understanding, and therefore in the manner of it. As man differs from a Beast in regard of his knowledge; so doth God also from man, in regard of his Knowledge. As God therefore is in Being and Perfection, infinitely more above a man than a man is above a Beast, the manner of his Knowledge must be infinitely more above a mans knowledge, than the knowledge of a man is above that of a Beast; our understandings can grasp an object in a moment, that is at a great distance from our sense; our eye by one elevated motion can view the Heavens; the manner of Gods Understanding must be unconceivably above our glimmerings; as the manner of his Being is infinitely more perfect than all Beings, so must the manner of his Understanding be infinitely more perfect than all Created understandings. \* Indeed the manner of Gods Knowledge can no more be known by us, than his Essence can be known by us; and the same incapacity in man, which renders him unable to comprehend the Being of God, renders him as unable to comprehend the manner of Gods Understanding: As there is a vast distance between the Essence of God, and our Beings, so there is between the Thoughts of God and our Thoughts; the Heavens are not so much higher than the Earth, as the Thoughts of God are above the thoughts of men, yea, and of the highest Angel, *Isa.* 55. 8, 9. yet tho' we know not the manner of Gods Knowledge, we know that he knows; as tho' we know not the infiniteness of God, yet we know that he is infinite. 'Tis Gods sole Prerogative to know himself, what he is; and it is equally his Prerogative to know how he knows; the manner of Gods knowledge therefore must be considered by us, as free from those Imperfections our knowledge is encumbered with.

*Maxim. T. v. in  
Dipert. l. p. 2.  
10.*

*Maimonides  
More Nevu-  
chim, part 3.  
c. 20. p. 321  
392, 393.*

In general, God doth necessarily know all things; he is necessarily Omnipresent, because of the immensity of his Essence; so he is necessarily Omniscient, because of the infiniteness of his Understanding. 'Tis no more at the liberty of his Will, whether he will know all things, than whether he will be able to create all things; 'tis no more at the liberty of his Will, whether he will be Omniscient, than whether he will be Holy; he can as little be ignorant, as he can be impure; he knows not all things, because he will know them, but because it is Essential to his nature to know them.

In particular,

Proposition 1. *God knows by his own Essence*; that is, He sees the nature of things in the Ideas of his own mind, and the events of things in the Decrees of his own Will; he knows them not by viewing the things, but by viewing himself; his own Essence is the Mirror and Book, wherein he beholds all things that he doth ordain, dispose and execute; and so he knows all things in their first and original cause; which is no other than his own Essence Willing, and his own Essence executing what he Wills; he knows them in his Power, as the Physical Principle; in his Will, as the moral Principle of things, as some speak.

He borrows not the knowledge of Creatures from the Creatures, nor depends upon them for means of Understanding, as we poor Worms do, who are beholden to the objects abroad to assist us with Images of things, and to our senses to convey them into our minds; God would then acquire a Perfection from those things which are below himself, and an excellency from those things that are vile; his Knowledge would not precede the Being of the Creatures, but the Creatures would be before the act of his Knowledge. If he understood by Images drawn from the Creatures, as we do, there would be something in God which is not God, viz. the Images of things drawn from outward objects: God would then depend upon Creatures for that which is more noble than a bare Being; for to be Understanding, is



more excellent than barely to be. Besides, if Gods Knowledge of his Creatures were derived from the Creatures by the impression of any thing upon him, as there is upon us, he could not know from Eternity, because from Eternity there was no actual existence of any thing but himself; and therefore there could not be any Images shot out from any thing, because there was not any thing in Being but God; as there is no Principle of Being to any thing but by his Essence; so there is no Principle of the Knowledge of any thing by himself but his Essence: If the knowledge of God were distinct from his Essence, his Knowledge were not Eternal, because there is nothing Eternal but his Essence.

His Understanding is not a faculty in him as it is in us, but the same with his Essence, because of the simplicity of his nature; God is not made up of various parts, one distinct from another as we are, and therefore doth not understand by a part of himself, but by himself; so that to be, and to understand, is the same with God; his Essence is not one thing, and the power whereby he understands, another; he would then be compounded, and not be the most simple Being: This also is necessary for the Perfection of God; for the more perfect and noble the way and manner of knowing is, the more perfect and noble is the knowledge. The perfection of Knowledge depends upon the excellency of the medium whereby we know. As a knowledge by Reason, is a more noble way of knowing than knowledge by sense; so 'tis more excellent for God to know by his Essence, than by any thing without him, any thing mixt with him; the first would render him dependant, and the other would demolish his simplicity.

Again, the natures of all things are contained in God; not formally; for then the nature of the Creatures would be God: but eminently; *he that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?* Psal. 94. 9. He hath in himself eminently the Beauty, Perfection, Life and Vigor of all Creatures; he Created nothing contrary to himself, but every thing with some foot-steps of himself in them; he could not have pronounced them good, as he did, had there been any thing in them contrary to his own goodness; and therefore as his Essence primarily represents it self, so it represents the Creatures, and makes them known to him. As the Essence of God is eminently all things, so by understanding his Essence, he eminently understands all things. And therefore he hath not one knowledge of himself, and another knowledge of the Creatures; but by knowing himself, as the original and exemplary cause of all things, he cannot be ignorant of any Creature which he is the cause of; so that he knows all things, not by an understanding of them, but by an understanding of himself; by understanding his own Power as the efficient of them, his own Will as the orderer of them, his own Goodness as the adorer and beautifier of them, his own Wisdom as the disposer of them, and his own Holiness, to which many of their actions are contrary.

\* Dionys.

\* Kendall  
against Good-  
win of Force-  
knowledge.

\* As he sees all things possible in his own Power, because he is able to produce them; so he sees all things future in his own Will, decreeing to effect them, if they be good, or Decreeing to permit them, if they be Evil. In this Glass he sees what he will give Being to, and what he will suffer to fall into a deficiency, without looking out of himself, or borrowing Knowledge from his Creatures; he knows all things in himself. And thus his Knowledge is more noble, and of a higher elevation than ours, or the knowledge of any Creature can be; he knows all things by one comprehension of the causes in himself.

Proposition 2. *God knows all things by one act of intuition.* This the Schools call an intuitive knowledge. This follows upon the other; for if he know by his own Essence, he knows all things by one act, there would be otherwise a division in his Essence, a first and a last, a nearness and a distance. As what he made, he made by one word; so what he sees, he pierceth into by one glance from Eternity to Eternity: As he Wills all things by one act of his Will, so he knows all things by one act of his Understanding: he knows not some things *discursively* from other things, nor knows one thing *successively* after another. As by one act he imparts Essence to things; so by one act he knows the nature of things.

1. *He doth not know by Discourse, as we do.* That is, By deducing one thing from another, and from common notions drawing out other rational conclusions and arguing



guing one thing from another, and springing up various consequences from some Principle assented to; but God stands in no need of reasonings; the making inferences and abstracting things, would be stains in the infinite Perfection of God; here would be a mixture of knowledg and ignorance; while he knew the Principle, he would not know the consequence and conclusion, till he had actually deduc'd it; one thing would be known after another, and so he would have an ignorance, and then a knowledg; and there would be different conceptions in God, and knowledg would be multiplyed according to the multitude of objects; as it is in humane Understandings. But God knows all things before they did exist, and never was ignorant of them, *Acts 15. 18. known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World.* He therefore knows them all at once; the knowledg of one thing was not before another, nor depended upon another, as it doth in the way of Humane reasoning. \* Tho' indeed some make a virtual Discourse in God; that is, tho' God hath a simple knowledg, yet it doth virtually contain a Discourse by the flowing of one knowledg from another; as from the knowledg of his own Power, he knows what things are possible to be made by him; and from the knowledg of himself, he passes to the knowledg of the Creatures; but this is only according to our Conception, and because of our weakness they are apprehended as two distinct acts in God, one of which is the reason of another: As we say that one Attribute is the reason of another; as his Mercy, may be said to be the reason of his Patience; and his Omnipresence, to be the reason of the knowledg of present things done in the World. God indeed by one simple act, knows himself and the Creatures; but when that Act whereby he knows himself, is conceived by us to pass to the knowledg of the Creatures, we must not understand it to be a new Act, distinct from the other; but the same act upon different terms or objects; such an order is in our understandings and conceptions, not in God's.

*Summ. vol. 1.  
de Dio, lib. 3.  
cap. 2. f. 123.  
124.*

2. *Nor doth he know successively, as we do.* That is, not by Drops, one thing after another. This follows from the former; a knowledg of all things without Discourse, is a Knowledg without Succession. \* The knowledg of one thing is not in God before another, one act of knowledg doth not beget another; in regard of the objects, one thing is before another, one year before another, one Generation of men before another, one is the cause, the other is the effect: In the Creatures there is such a Succession, and God knows there will be such a Succession; but there is no such order in Gods knowledg; for he knows all those Successions by one glance, without any succession of knowledg in himself.

*Gambachii  
Aquin. q. 14.  
cap. 1. p. 115.*

Man in his view of things, must turn sometimes his Body, sometimes only his Eyes, he cannot see all the Contents of a Letter at once, and tho' he beholds all the lines in the page of a Book at once, and a whole Country in a Map, yet to know what is contain'd in them, he must turn his eye from word to word, and line to line, and so spin out one thing after another by several acts and motions. We behold a great part of the Sea at once\*, but not all the dimensions of it; for to know the length of the Sea, we move our eyes one way; to see the breadth of it, we turn our eyes another way; to behold the depth of it, we have another motion of them. And when we cast our eyes up to Heaven, we seem to receive in at an instant the whole tent of the Hemisphere; yet there is but one object the eye can attentively pitch upon, and we cannot distinctly view what we see in a lump, without various motions of our eyes, which is not done without succession of Time\*. And certainly the Understanding of Angels is bounded, according to the measure of their Beings; so that it cannot extend it self at one time, to a quantity of objects, to make a distinct application of them, but the objects must present themselves one by one: But God is all Eye, all Understanding; as there is no succession in his Essence, so there is none in his Knowledg; *his understanding* in the nature, and in the act, *is infinite*, as it is in the Text. He therefore sees Eternally and Universally, all things, by one act, without any motion, much less various motions; the various changes of things, in their substance, qualities, places and relations, withdraw not any thing from his Eye, nor bring any new thing to his Knowledg; he doth not upon consideration of present things turn his mind from past; or when he beholds future things, turn his mind from present; but he sees them not one after another, but all at once and all together; the whole Circle of his own Counsels, and all the various Lines drawn

*\* Faith Epiphanius.*

*Amvram moral chrest. Tom. 3. p. 127.*



forth from the Center of his Will, to the circumference of his Creatures; Just as if a man were able in one moment to read a whole Library; or, as if you should imagine a transparent Chrystal Globe, hung up in the midit of a Room, and so framed as to take in the images of all things in the Room, the Fret-Work in the Cieling, the in-laid parts of the Floor, and the particular parts of the Tapeltry about it, the eye of a man would behold all the Beauty of the Room at once in it. As the Sun by one light and heat frames sensible things; so God by one simple act knows all things: As he knows mutable things by an immutable knowledg, bodily things by a spiritual knowledg; so he knows many things by one knowledg, Heb. 4. 13. *All things are open and naked to him*, more than any one thing can be to us; and therefore he views all things at once, as well as we can behold and contemplate one thing alone. As he is the *Father of Lights*, a God of infinite Understanding, there is *no variableness in his mind*, nor any shadow of turning of his eye, as there is of ours, to behold various things, James 1. 17. his Knowledg being Eternal, includes all times; there is nothing past or future with him, and therefore he beholds all things by one and the same manner of knowledg, and comprehends all knowable things by one act, and in one moment.

This must needs be so,

1. *Because of the eminency of God.* God is above all, and therefore cannot but see the motions of all. He that sits in a Theater, or at the top of a place, sees all things, all persons, by one aspect he comprehends the whole Circle of the place; whereas he that sits below, when he looks before, he cannot see things behind; God being above all, about all, in all, sees at once the motions of all. The whole World in the eye of God, is less than a Point that divides one Sentence from another in a Book; as a Cypher, a grain of Dust, Isa. 40. 15. so little a thing can be seen by man at once; and all things being as little in the eye of God, are seen at once by him. As all Time is but a moment to his Eternity; so all things are but as a point to the immensity of his Knowledg, which he can behold with more ease than we can move or turn our eye.

Cusan. p. 646.

2. *Because all the Perfections of Knowing, are united in God.* \* As particular senses are divided in man, by one he Sees, by another he Hears, by another he Smells, yet all those are united in one common sense, and this common sense apprehends all; so the various and distinct ways of knowledg in the Creatures, are all eminently united in God. A man when he sees a grain of Wheat, understands at once all things that can in Time proceed from that Seed; so God by beholding his own vertue and power, beholds all things which shall in time be unfolded by him. We have a shadow of this way of knowledg in our own Understanding; the sense only perceives a thing present, and one object only proper and suitable to it; as the eye sees colour, the ear hears sounds; we see this and that man, one time this, another minute that; but the understanding abstracts a notion of the common nature of man, and frames a conception of that nature wherein all men agree; and so in a manner beholds and understands all men at once, by understanding the common nature of man, which is a degree of knowledg above the sense and fancy; we may then conceive an infinite vaster Perfection in the Understanding of God. As to know, is simply better than not to know at all; so to know by one act comprehensive, is a greater Perfection than to know by divided acts, by succession to receive information, and to have an increase or decrease of knowledg, to be like a Bucket, alway descending into the Well, and fetching Water from thence. 'Tis a mans weakness that he is fixed on one object only at a time; 'tis Gods Perfection that he can behold all at once, and is fixed upon one no more than upon another.

Proposition 3. *God knows all things independently.* This is Essential to an infinite Understanding. He receives not his knowledg from any thing without him, he hath no Tutor to instruct him, or Book to inform him; *who hath been his Counsellor?* saith the Prophet, Isa. 40. 13. he hath no need of the Counsels of others, nor of the instructions of others. This follows upon the *first and second Propositions*; if he knows things by his Essence, then as his Essence is independent from the Creatures, so is his Knowledg; he borrows not any images from the Creature, hath no species or pictures of things in his Understanding, as we have; no Beams from the Crea-



Creature strike upon him, to enlighten him, but Beams from him upon the World; the Earth sends not Light to the Sun, but the Sun to the Earth.

Our knowledg indeed depends upon the object; but all Created objects depend upon Gods Knowledg and Will: We could not know Creatures, unless they were; but Creatures could not be, unless God knew them. As nothing that he Wills is the cause of his Will; so nothing that he knows is the cause of his Knowledg; he did not make things to know them, but he knows them to make them; Who will imagine that the mark of the foot in the Dust, is the cause that the foot stands in this or that particular place?

If his knowledg did depend upon the things, then the existence of things did precede Gods knowledg of them; to say that they are the cause of Gods Knowledg, is to say, that God was not the cause of their Being; and if he did Create them, it was effected by a blind and ignorant power, he Created he knew not what, till he had produced it. If he be beholden for his Knowledg to the Creatures he hath made, he had then no knowledg of them before he made them. If his knowledg were dependant upon them, it could not be Eternal, but must have a beginning when the Creatures had a beginning, and be of no longer a date than since the nature of things was in actual existence; for whatsoever is a cause of knowledg, doth precede the knowledg it causes, either in order of time, or order of nature; Temporal things therefore cannot be the cause of that knowledg which is Eternal. His Works could not be *foreknown* to him, if his Knowledg commenc'd with the existence of his Works, If he knew them before he made them, he could not derive a knowledg from them after they were made. He made all things *in Wisdom*, Psal. 104. 24. how can this be imagin'd, if the things known were the cause of his Knowledg, and so before his knowledg, and therefore before his action? God would not then be the first in the order of knowing Agents, because he would not act by Knowledg, but act before he knew, and know after he had acted, and so the Creature which he made, would be before the act of his Understanding, whereby he knew what he made.

Act. 15. 18.

Bradward lib. 1. cap. 15.

Again, since Knowledg is a *Perfection*, if Gods knowledg of the Creatures depended upon the Creatures, he would derive an excellency from them, they would derive no excellency from any *Idea* in the Divine mind; he would not be infinitely perfect in himself; if his Perfection in Knowledg were gained from any thing without himself and below himself, he would not be sufficient of himself, but be under an indigence, which wanted a supply from the things he had made; and could not be eternally perfect till he had created, and seen the effects of his own Power, Goodness and Wisdom, to render him more wise and knowing in Time than he was from Eternity; Who can fancy such a God as this, without destroying the Deity he pretends to adore? for if his Understanding be perfected by something without him, why may not his Essence be perfected by something without him; that as he was made knowing by something without him, he might be made God by something without him?

How could his Understanding be infinite, if it depended upon a finite object, as upon a cause? Is the Majesty of God to be debas'd to a Mendicant condition, to seek for a supply from things inferior to himself? Is it to be imagin'd that a Fool, a Toad, a Fly should be assistant to the knowledg of God? that the most noble Being should be perfected by things so vile, that the supream cause of all things should receive any addition of knowledg, and be determin'd in his Understanding, by the notion of things so mean? To conclude this particular, all things depend upon his knowledg, his knowledg depends upon nothing, but is as independent as himself, and his own Essence.

Proposition 4. *God knows all things distinctly.* His understanding is infinite in regard of clearness; *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*, John 1. 5. he sees not through a Mist or Cloud; there's no blemish in his Understanding, no mote or beam in his eye, to render any thing obscure to him. Man discerns the surface and outside of things, little or nothing of the Essence of things; we see the noblest things, but *as in a glass darkly*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. the too great nearness, as well as the too great distance of a thing, hinders our sight; the smallness of a mote escapes our eye, and



and so our knowledg; also the weaknes of our understanding is troubled with the multitude of things, and cannot know many things but confusedly. But God knows the forms and essence of things, every circumstance; nothing is so deep, but he sees to the bottom; he sees the mass, and sees the moles of Beings; his Understanding being infinite, is not offended with a multitude of things, or distracted with the variety of them; he discerns every thing infinitely more clearly and perfectly than *Adam* or *Solomon* could any one thing in the Circle of their knowledg: What knowledg they had, was from him; he hath therefore infinitely a more perfect knowledg than they were capable in their natures to receive a communication of. All things are open to him, *Heb. 4. 12.* the least fibre in its nakedness and distinct frame, is transparent to him; as by the help of Glasses, the mouth, feet, hands of a small Insect, are visible to a man, which seem to the eye, without that assistance, one intire piece, not diversified into parts. All the causes, qualities, natures, properties of things are open to him, *he brings out the Host of Heaven by number, and calleth them by Names, Isa. 40. 26.* he numbers the Hairs of our heads; what more distinct than number? thus God beholds things in every unity, which makes up the heap: He knows, and none else can, every thing in its true and intimate causes, in its original and intermediate causes; in himself, as the cause of every particular of their Being, every Property in their Being.

Knowledg by the causes is the most noble and perfect Knowledg, and most suited to the infinite excellency of the Divine Being; he created all things, and ordered them to a universal and particular end; he therefore knows the essential Properties of every thing, every activity of their nature, all their fitness for those distinct ends, to which he orders them, and for which he governs and disposeth them; and understands their darkest and most hidden qualities, infinitely clearer than any eye can behold the clear Beams of the Sun. He knows all things as he made them; he made them distinctly, and therefore knows them distinctly, and that every individual; therefore God is said, *Gen. 1. 31. to see every thing that he had made;* he took a review of every particular Creature he had made, and upon his view pronounced it good: To pronounce that good, which was not exactly known in every Creek, in every Mite of its nature, had not consisted with his veracity; for every one that speaks truth ignorantly, that knows not that he speaks Truth, is a Liar in speaking that which is true. God knows every act of his own Will, whether it be positive or permissive, and therefore every effect of his Will. We must needs ascribe to God a perfect Knowledg; but a confus'd Knowledg cannot challenge that Title. To know things only in a heap, is unworthy of the Divine Perfection; for if God knows his own ends in the Creation of things, he knows distinctly the means whereby he will bring them to those ends for which he hath appointed them: No Wise man intends an end, without a knowledg of the means conducing to that end; an ignorance then of any thing in the World, which falls under the nature of a means to a Divine end (and there is nothing in the World but doth), would be inconsistent with the Perfection of God; it would ascribe to him a blind Providence in the World. As there can be nothing imperfect in his Being and Essence, so there can be nothing imperfect in his Understanding and Knowledg; and therefore not a confus'd Knowledg, which is an Imperfection. *Darkness and Light are both alike to him, Psal. 139. 12.* he sees distinctly into the one, as well as the other; what is Darkness to us, is not so to him.

Proposition 5. *God knows all things infallibly.* His Understanding is infinite, in regard of certainty; every Tittle of what he knows, is as far from failing, as what he speaks; our *Saviour* affirms the one, *Math. 5. 18.* and there is the same reason of the certainty of one as well as the other; his Essence is the measure of his Knowledg; whence it is as impossible that God should be mistaken in the knowledg of the least thing in the World, as it is that he should be mistaken in his own Essence; for knowing himself comprehensively, he must know all other things infallibly: Since he is Essentially Omniscient, he is no more capable of error in his Understanding, than of Imperfection in his Essence; his Counsels are as unerring as his Essence is perfect, and his knowledg as infallible as his Essence is free from defect.

Again, since God knows all things with a *knowledg of Vision*, because he Wills them;



them; his Knowledg must be as infallible as his purpose; now his purpose will certainly be effected; *what he hath thought shall come to pass, and what he hath purposed shall stand, Isa. 14. 24. His Counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure, Isa. 46. 10.*

There may be interruptions of nature, the foundations of it may be out of course, but there can be no bar upon the Author of nature; he hath an infinite power to carry on and perfect the resolves of his own Will; he can effect what he pleases by a Word. Speech is one of the least motions; yet when God said, *let there be Light, there was Light*, arising from Darkness. No reason can be given why God knows a thing to be, but because he infallibly Wills it to be.

Again, \* The Schools make this difference between the knowledg of the good and bad Angels, that the good are never deceived; for that is repugnant to their Blessed State; for deceit is an evil and an imperfection, inconsistent with that perfect Blessedness the good Angels are possessed of; and would it not much more be a stain upon the Blessedness of that God that is Blessed for ever, to be subject to deceit? His knowledg therefore is not an Opinion, for an Opinion is uncertain; a man knows not what to think, but leans to one part of the Question propos'd, rather than to the other. If things did not come to pass therefore as God knows them, his knowledg would be imperfect; and since he knows by his Essence, his Essence also would be imperfect, if God were expos'd to any Deceit in his Knowledg; he knows by himself, who is the highest Truth; and therefore it is impossible he should err in his Understanding.

Saurez. Vol. 2.  
p. 228.

Proposition 6. *God knows immutably.* His Understanding else could not be infinite; every thing and every act that is mutable, is *finite*, it hath its bounds; for there is a term from which it changeth, and a term to which it changes. \* There is a change in the Understanding when we gain the knowledg of a thing, which was unknown to us before; or when we actually consider a thing which we did not know before, tho' we had the Principles of the Knowledg of it; or, when we know that distinctly, which we before knew confusedly. None of these can be ascribed to God, without a manifest disparagement of his infiniteness: Our knowledg indeed is alway arriving to us or flowing from us; we pass from one degree to another, from worse to better, or from better to worse; but God loses nothing by the Ages that are run, nor will gain any thing by the Ages that are to come. If there were a variation in the knowledg of God, by the daily and hourly Changes in the World, he would grow wiser than he was, he was not then perfectly wise before. A Change in the objects known, infers not any change in the understanding exercised about them; the Wheel moves round, the Spokes that are lowest, are presently highest, and presently return to be low again; but the eye that beholds them, changes not with the motion of the Wheels. Gods knowledg admits no more of increase or decrease, than his Essence doth; Since God knows by his Essence, and the Essence of God is God himself, his knowledg must be void of any Change. The knowledg of possible things arising from the knowledg of his own power cannot be changed, unless his power be chang'd, and God become weak and impotent; the knowledg of future things cannot be chang'd, because that knowledg ariseth from his Will, which is irreversibile, *the Counsel of the Lord that shall stand, Prov. 19. 21.* so that if God can never decay into weakness, and never turn to inconstancy, there can be no variation of his knowledg. He knows what he can do, and he knows what he will do, and both these being immutable, his knowledg must consequently be so too. It was not necessary that this or that Creature should be, and therefore it was not necessary that God should know this or that Creature with a knowledg of Vision; but after the Will of God had determin'd the existence of this or that Creature, his knowledg being then determin'd to this or that object, did necessarily continue unchangeable. God therefore knows no more now, than he did before; and at the end of the World he shall know no more than he doth now; and from Eternity he knows no less than he doth now, and shall do to Eternity. Tho' things pass into Being and out of Being, the knowledg of God doth not vary with them, for he knows them as well before they were, as when they are; and knows them as well when they are past, as when they are present.

Tileni Synagoga  
Part 1.  
Disp. 13. Theol.  
13.

Propo-



Παρο. αὐτοῦ  
τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ.

Damianus.

Gerhard.

Gamach in 1.  
part Aquin.  
q. 14. cap. 1.  
p. 118, 119.

**Proposition 7.** *God knows all things perpetually, i.e. in act.* Since he knows by his Essence, he always knows, because his Essence never ceaseth, but is a pure act; so that he doth not know only in habit, but in act. Men that have the knowledge of some Art or Science, have it always in habit, tho' when they are asleep they have it not in act: A Musitian hath the habit of Musick, but doth not so much as think of it when his Senses are bound up. But God is *an unsleepy eye* \*, he never slumbers nor sleeps; he never slumbers, in regard of his Providence, and therefore never slumbers in regard of his knowledge. He knows not himself, nor any other Creature more perfectly at one time than at another; he is perpetually in the act of knowing, as the *Sun* is in the act of shining; the Sun never ceas'd to shine in one or other part of the World, since it was first fixed in the Heavens; nor God to be in the act of Knowledge, since he was God; and therefore since he always was, and always will be God, he always was, and always will be in the act of knowledge; always knowing his own Essence, he must alway actually know what hath been gone and ceas'd from Being, and what shall come and arise into Being. As a Watchmaker knows what Watch he intends to make; and after he hath made it, tho' it be broken to pieces, or consumed by the Fire, he still knows it, because he knows the Copy of it in his own mind. Sometherefore in regard of this perpetual act of the Divine Knowledge, have called God not *Intellectus*, but the *intellection of intellecti- ons*; we have no proper *English* Word to express the act of the *Understanding*; as his power is co-eternal with him, so is his knowledge; all times past, present and to come, are embrac'd in the Bosom of his Understanding; he fixed all things in their Seasons, that nothing new comes to him, nothing old passes from him \*. What is done in a Thousand years, is as actually present with his Knowledge, as what is done in one day, or in one Watch in the night, is with ours; Since a *Thousand years are no more to God than a day, or a Watch in the Night is to us*, Psal. 90. 4. God is in the highest degree of Being, and therefore in the highest degree of Understanding. Knowledge is one of the most perfect acts in any Creature. God therefore hath all Actual, as well as Essential and Habitual knowledge, *his Understanding is infinite.*

IV. The fourth general, is *Reasons* to prove this.

*Reas. 1.* *God must know what any Creature knows, and more than any Creature knows.*

There is nothing done in the World, but is known by some Creature or other; every action is at least known by the person that acts, and therefore known by the Creator, vvhho cannot be exceeded by any of the Creatures, or all of them together; and every Creature is known by him, since every Creature is made by him. \* And as God vvorks all things by an Infinite Povver, so he knowvs all things by an Infinite Understanding.

**1. The Perfection of God requires this.** \* All Perfections that include no Essential Defect, are formally in God; but knowledge includes no Essential Defect in it self, therefore it is in God. Knowledge in it self, is desirable, and an excellency; Ignorance is a defect; 'tis impossible that the least grain of defect can be found in the most perfect Being. Since God is Wise, he must be Knowing; for Wisdom must have Knowledge for the *Basis* of it. A Creature can no more be vvise vvithout Knowledge, than he can be active vvithout Strength. Now God is *only Wise*, Rom. 16. 27. and therefore only knowing in the highest degree of Knowledge, incomprehensibly beyond all degrees of Knowledge, because infinite.

Again, the more Spiritual any thing is, the more Understanding it is. The dull Body understands nothing; Sense perceives, but the Understanding faculty is seated in the Soul, vvhich is of a spiritual nature, vvhich knowvs things that are present, remembers things that are past, foresees many things to come. What is the property of a Spiritual nature, must be in a most eminent manner, in the supream Spirit of the World, that is, in the highest degree of Spirituality, and most remote from any matter.

Again, nothing can enjoy other things, but by some kind of Understanding them; God hath the highest enjoyment of himself, of all things he hath Created, of all the Glory that accrues to him by them; nothing of Perfection and Blessedness can be vvanting to him. Felicity doth not consist vvith ignorance, and all imperfect knowledge is a degree of ignorance: God therefore doth perfectly know himself, and all things from vvhence he designs any glory to himself. The most noble manner of acting



acting must be ascribed to God, as being the most noble and excellent Being; to act by Knowledge, is the most excellent manner of acting; God hath therefore, not only Knowledge, but the most excellent manner of Knowledge; for as it is better to know than to be ignorant, so it is better to know in the most excellent manner, than to have a mean and low kind of knowledge; His knowledge therefore must be every way as perfect as his Essence, infinite as well as that. An infinite nature must have an infinite knowledge: A God ignorant of any thing, cannot be counted infinite, for he is not infinite to whom any degree of Perfection is wanting.

2. *All the knowledge in any Creature is from God.* And you must allow God a greater and more perfect Knowledge than any Creature hath, yea, than all Creatures have. All the drops of Knowledge any Creature hath, come from God; and all the knowledge in every Creature, that ever was, is, or shall be in the whole Mass, was derived from him. If all those several Drops in particular Creatures, were collected into one Spirit, into one Creature, it would be an unconceivable knowledge, yet still lower than what the Author of all that knowledge hath; for God cannot give more knowledge than he hath himself; nor is the Creature capable of receiving so much Knowledge as God hath. As the Creature is incapable of receiving so much power as God hath, for then it would be Almighty; so it is incapable of receiving so much Knowledge as God hath, for then it would be God. Nothing can be made by God equal to him in any thing; if any thing could be made as Knowing as God, it would be Eternal as God, it would be the cause of all things as God. The Knowledge that we poor Worms have, is an Argument God uses for the asserting the greatness of his own Knowledge, *Psal. 94. 10. He that teaches man knowledge, shall not he know?* Man hath here Knowledge ascribed to him, the Author of this Knowledge is God, he furnished him with it, and therefore doth in a higher manner possess it; and much more than can fall under the comprehension of any Creature; as the Sun enlightens all things, but hath more Light in it self than it darts upon the Earth or the Heavens; and shall not God eminently contain all that knowledge he imparts to the Creatures, and infinitely more exact and comprehensive?

3. *The accusations of Conscience, evidence Gods knowledge of all actions of all his Creatures.* Doth not Conscience check for the most secret Sins, to which none are privy but a mans self; the whole World beside being ignorant of his Crime? do not the fears of another Judge gall the heart? If a Judgment above him be fear'd, an Understanding above him discerning their Secrets is confest by those fears; whence can those horrors arise, if there be not a Superior that understands and records the Crime? What Perfection of the Divine Being can this relate unto, but Omniscience? What other Attribute is to be feared, if God were defective in this?

The Condemnation of us by our own Hearts, when none in the World can condemn us, renders it legible, that there is *one greater than our hearts*, in respect of Knowledge, who *knows all things*, 1 John 3. 20. Conscience would be a vain Principle, and stings less without this; it would be an easy matter to silence all its accusations, and mockingly laugh in the face of its severest frowns. What need any trouble themselves, if none knows their Crimes but themselves? Conceal'd Sins, gnawing the Conscience, are Arguments of Gods Omniscience of all present and past actions.

4. *God is the first cause of every thing, every Creature is his Production.* Since all Creatures, from the highest Angel to the lowest Worm, exist by the power of God; if God understands his own Power and Excellency, nothing can be hid from him, that was brought forth by that Power, as well as nothing can be unknown to him, that that Power is able to produce. \*If God knows nothing besides himself, he may then believe there is nothing beside himself; we shall then fancy a God miserably mistaken: If he knows nothing besides himself, then things were not Created by him, or not understandingly and voluntarily Created, but drop'd from him before he was aware. To think that the first cause of all should be ignorant of those things he is the cause of, is to make him not a voluntary, but natural Agent, and therefore necessary; and then that the Creature came from him as Light from the Sun, and moisture from the Water; this would be an absurd opinion of the Worlds



Creation; if God be a voluntary Agent, as he is, he must be an intelligent Agent. The faculty of Will is not in any Creature, without that of Understanding also: If God be an intelligent Agent, his knowledg must extend as far as his operation, and every object of his operation, unless we imagine God hath lost his Memory, in that long Tract of time since the first Creation of them. An *Artificer* cannot be ignorant of his own Work; If God knows himself, he knows himself to be a Cause; how can he know himself to be a Cause, unless he know the Effects he is the Cause of? One relation implies another; a man cannot know himself to be a Father, unless he hath a Child, because it is a name of relation, and in the notion of it refers to another. The name of cause is a name of relation, and implies an effect; If God therefore know himself in all his Perfections, as the Cause of things, he must know all his acts, what his Wisdom contrived, what his Counsel determin'd, and what his Power effected. The knowledg of God is to be suppos'd in a free determination of himself; and that knowledg must be perfect, both of the object, act, and all the circumstances of it. How can his Will freely produce any thing that was not first known in his Understanding? From this the *Prophet* argues the understanding of God, and the unsearchableness of it, because he is the *Creator of the ends of the earth*, Isa. 40. 28. and the same reason *David* gives of Gods Knowledg of him, and of every thing he did, and that *afar off*, because he was *formed by him*, Psal. 139. 2, 15, 16. As the perfect making of things only belongs to God; so doth the perfect knowledg of things; 'tis absurd to think, that God should be ignorant of what he hath given Being to; that he should not know all the Creatures and their qualities, the Plants and their vertues; as that a man should not know the Letters that are formed by him in Writing. Every thing bears in it self the mark of Gods Perfections; and shall not God know the representation of his own vertue?

5. *Without this Knowledg, God could no more be the Governour, than he could be the Creator of the World.* Knowledg is the Basis of Providence; to Know things, is before the Government of things; a *practical* knowledg cannot be without a *theoretical* knowledg. Nothing could be directed to its proper end, without the knowledg of the nature of it, and its suitableness to answer that end for which it is intended. As every thing, even the minutest, falls under the conduct of God, so every thing falls under the knowledg of God. A Blind Coach-man is not able to hold the Reins of his Horses, and direct them in right Paths: Since the Providence of God is about particulars, his Knowledg must be about particulars; he could not else govern them in particular; nor could all things be said to depend upon him in their Being and Operations. Providence depends upon the knowledg of God, and the exercise of it upon the Goodness of God; it cannot be without Understanding and Will; Understanding, to know what is convenient, and Will to perform it. When our *Saviour* therefore speaks of Providence, he intimates these two in a special manner, *Your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things*, Mat. 6. 32. and *goodness*, in Luke. 11. 13. The reason of Providence is so joyned with Omniscience, that they cannot be separated: What a kind of God would he be that were ignorant of those things that were governed by him? The ascribing this Perfection to him, asserts his Providence; for it is as easy for one that knows all things, to look over the whole World, if writ with Monosyllables, in every little particular of it; as it is with a man to take a view of one Letter in an Alphabet.

*Sabund Tit. 84.*  
much changed.

\* Again, if God were not Omniscient, how could he reward the Good, and punish the Evil? the works of men are either rewardable or punishable; not only according to their outward circumstances, but inward Principles and Ends, and the degrees of Venom lurking in the heart. The exact discerning of these, without a possibility to be deceived, is necessary to pass a right and infallible Judgment upon them, and proportion the censure and punishment to the Crime: Without such a Knowledg and discerning, men would not have their due; nay, a Judgment just for the matter, would be unjust in the manner, because unjustly pass'd, without an understanding of the merit of the Cause. 'Tis necessary therefore that the Supream Judg of the World should not be thought to be blindfold, when he distributes his Rewards and Punishments, and muffle his face when he passes his Sentence. 'Tis necessary to ascribe to him the knowledg of mens thoughts and intentions; the  
secret



secret wills and aims; the hidden works of darkness in every mans Conscience, because every mans work is to be measured by the Will and inward frame. 'Tis necessary that he should perpetually retain all those things in the indelible and plain records of his Memory, that there may not be any work without a just proportion of what is due to it. This is the glory of God to discover the secrets of all hearts at last, as 1 Cor. 4. 5. *the Lord shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the Counsels of all hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God.* This knowledg fits him to be a Judg; the reason why the *ungodly shall not stand in Judgment*, is because God *knows* their ways, which is implied in his *knowing the way of the righteous.* \*

\* Psal. 1. 5. c.

I now proceed to the Use.

USE the first, is of *information or instruction.* If God hath all knowledg; then

1. *Jesus Christ is not a meer Creature.* The two Titles of *wonderful Counsellor*, and *mighty God*, are given him in conjunction, *Isa. 9. 6.* not only the *Angel of the Covenant*, as he is called, *Malach. 3. 1.* or the *Executor of his Counsels*, but a *Counsellor*, in conjunction with him in Counsel as well as Power: This Title is superior to any Title given to any of the Prophets in regard of their Predictions; and therefore I should take it rather as the note of his perfect understanding, than of his perfect teaching and discovering; as *Calvin* doth: He is not only the Revealer of what he knows, so were the *Prophets* according to their measures; but the Counsellor of what he revealed, having a perfect understanding of all the Counsels of God, as being interested in them, as the *mighty God.* He calls himself by the peculiar Title of God, and declares that he will manifest himself by this Prerogative to all the Churches, *Rev. 2. 23.* *And all the Churches shall know that I am he, which searches the Reins and Hearts*, the most hidden operations of the minds of men that lye locked up from the view of all the World besides. And this was no new thing to him, after his Ascension; for the same Perfection he had in the time of his earthly flesh, *Luke 6. 8.* *he knew their Thoughts*; his eyes are therefore compar'd, *Cant. 5. 12.* to *Doves eyes*, which are clear and quick; and to a *flame of fire*, *Rev. 1. 14.* not only heat to consume his Enemies, but Light to discern their contrivances against the Church; he pierceth, by his knowledg, into all parts, as fire pierceth into the closest particle of Iron, and separates between the most united parts of Metals; and some tell us, he is called a *Roe*, from the perspicacity of his Sight, as well as from the swiftness of his motion.

1. *He hath a perfect Knowledg of the Father*; he knows the Father, and none else knowv the Father; *Angels* knowv God, *men* knowv God, but *Christ* in a peculiar manner knowv the Father; *no man knows the Son but the Father*; *neither knows any man the Father, save the Son*, *Mat. 11. 27.* he knows so, as that he learns not from any other; he doth perfectly comprehend him, vvhich is beyond the reach of any Creature, vvvith the addition of all the Divine Vertue; not because of any incapacity in God to reveal, but the incapacity of the Creature to receive; finite is incapable of being made infinite, and therefore incapable of comprehending infinite; so that *Christ* cannot be *Deus factus*, made of a Creature a God, to comprehend God; for then of *finite* he vvould become *infinite*, vvhich is a contradiction. As the Spirit is God, because *he searches the deep things of God*, *1 Cor. 2. 10.* that is, comprehends them \*, as the Spirit of a man doth the things of a man (now the Spirit of man understands vvhhat it Thinks, and vvhhat it Wills) so the Spirit of God understands vvhhat is in the Understanding of God, and vvhhat is in the Will of God. He hath an absolute knowvledg ascrib'd to him, and such as could not be ascrib'd to any thing but a Divinity: Novv if the Spirit knowv the deep things of God, and takes from *Christ* vvhhat he shewv to us of him, *John 16. 15.* he cannot be ignorant of those things himself; he must knowv the depths of God that affords us that Spirit, that is not ignorant of any of the Counsels of the Fathers Will; since he comprehends the Father, and the Father him, he is in himself infinite; for God whose Essence is infinite, is infinitely knowable; but no Created understanding can infinitely know God. The infiniteness of the object hinders it from being understood by any thing that is not infinite. Though a Creature should understand all the works of God, yet it cannot be therefore said to understand God

Terav. Theo.  
dogmat. Tom.  
1. p. 457. Sec.



himself: As tho' I may understand all the volitions and motions of my Soul, yet it doth not follow that therefore I understand the whole nature and substance of my Soul; or if a man understood all the effects of the Sun, that therefore he understands fully the nature of the Sun. But Christ knows the Father, he lay in the *Bosom of the Father*, was in the greatest intimacy with him, *John* 1. 18. and from this intimacy with him, he saw him and knew him; so he knows God as much as he is knowable; and therefore knows him perfectly as the Father knows himself by a *comprehensive Vision*; this is the knowledg of God wherein properly the infiniteness of his understanding appears: And our *Saviour* uses such expressions which manifest his Knowledg to be above all Created Knowledg, and such a manner of knowledg of the Father, as the Father hath of him.

2. *Christ knows all Creatures.* That knowledg which comprehends God, comprehends all Created things as they are in God; 'tis a knowledg that sinks to the depths of his Will, and therefore extends to all the acts of his Will in Creation and Providence; by knowing the Father he knows all things that are contained in the Vertue, Power and Will of God; *whatsoever the Father doth, that the Son doth*, *John* 5. 19. As the Father therefore knows all things he is the cause of, so doth the Son know all things he is the worker of; as the perfect making of all things belongs to both, so doth the perfect knowledg of all things belong to both; where the action is the same, the knowledg is the same. Now the Father did not Create one thing, and Christ another; *but all things were Created by him, and for him: all things both in Heaven and Earth*, *Col.* 1. 16. as he knows himself as the cause of all things, and the end of all things, he cannot be ignorant of all things that were effected by him, and are referred to him; he knows all Creatures in God, as he knows the Essence of God, and knows all Creatures in themselves, as he knows his own acts and the fruits of his Power; those things must be in his Knowledg that were in his Power, *all the Treasures of the Wisdom and Knowledg of God are hid in him*, *Col.* 2. 3. Now it is not the Wisdom of God to know in part, and be in part ignorant. He cannot be ignorant of any thing, since there is *nothing but what was made by him*, *John* 1. 3. and since it is less to know than Create; for we know many things which we cannot make. If he be the Creator, he cannot but be the discern-er of what he made; this is a part of Wisdom belonging to an Artificer to know the nature and quality of what he makes. Since he cannot be ignorant of what he furnisht with Being, and with various endowments, he must know them not only universally, but particularly.

3. *Christ knows the hearts and affections of men.* Peter scruples not to ascribe to him this knowledg, among the knowledg of all other things, *John* 21. 17. *Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* From Christs knowledg of all things, he concludes his knowledg of the inward frames and dispositions of men. To search the heart, is the sole Prerogative of God, *1 Kings* 8. 39. *for thou, even thou only knowest the hearts of all the Children of men*: Shall we take (*only*) here with a limitation, as some that are no Friends to the Deity of Christ would, and say, God only knows the hearts of men from himself, and by his own infinite vertue? Why may we not take (*only*) in other places with a limitation, and make nonsense of it, as *Psal.* 86. 10. *Thou art God alone.* Is it to be understood, that God is God alone from himself, but other Gods may be made by him, and so there may be numberless infinites? As God is God alone, so that none can be God but himself; so he alone knows all the hearts of all the Children of men, and none but he can know them; this knowledg is from his nature. \* The reason why God knows the hearts of men, is rendered in the Scripture double, because he *created them*, and because he is *present every where*, *Psal.* 33. 13, 15. these *two* are by the Confession of *Christians* and *Pagans* universally received as the proper Characters of Divinity, whereby the *Deity* is distinguish'd from all Creatures. Now when Christ ascribes this to himself, and that with such an *Emphasis*, that nothing greater than that could be urg'd, *as he doth*, *Rev.* 2. 23. we must conclude that he is of the same Essence with God, one with him in his Nature, as well as one with him in his Attributes. God only knows the hearts of the Children of men; there is the *unity* of God: Christ searches the Hearts and Reins; there is a *distinction* of Persons in an *oneness* of essence; he knows the hearts of all men, not only of those that were with him in the

*Petr. Theolo.*  
*Dogmat. Tom.*  
*1. p. 467.*

*Placans de*  
*deitate Chri-*  
*sti.*



the time of the Flesh, that have been and shall be, since his Ascension; but of those that lived and died before his coming, because he is to be the Judge of all that lived before his humiliation on earth, as well as after his exaltation in Heaven. It pertains to him as a Judge, to know distinctly the merits of the Cause of which he is to Judge; and this excellency of searching the hearts is mention'd by himself with relation to his judicial Proceeding, *I will give to every one of you according to your Works.* And tho' a Creature may know what is in a mans heart, if it be revealed to him, yet such a knowledg is a knowledg only by report, not by inspection; yet this latter is ascrib'd to *Christ*, John 2. 24. 25. *he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man;* he looked into their hearts. The Evangelist to allay the amazement of men at his relation of our Saviours knowledg of the inward falsity of those that made a splendid Profession of him; doth not say, the Father revealed it to him; but intimates it to be an unseparable Property of his nature. No covering was so thick as to bound his eye; no pretence so glittering as to impose upon his understanding. Those that made a Profession of him, and could not be discerned by the eye of man from his faithfulest Attendants, were in their inside known to him plainer than their outside was to others; and therefore he committed not himself to them, tho' they seemed to be perswaded to a real belief in his name, because of the Power of his Miracles; and were touched with an admiration of him, as some great Prophet, and perhaps declared him to be the Messiah, ver. 23.

4. He had a foreknowledg of the particular inclinations of men, before those distinct inclinations were in actual Being in them. This is plainly asserted John 6. 64. *but there are some of you that believe not, for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.* When Christ assured them from the knowledg of the hearts of his followers, that some of them were void of that Faith they profest; The Evangelist to stop their amazement, that Christ should have such a power and vertue, adds, that he *knew from the beginning*, that he had not only a present knowledg, but a foreknowledg of every ones inclination; he knew not only now and then what was in the Hearts of his Disciples, but from the beginning of any ones giving up their Names to him; he knew whether it were a pretence or sincere, he knew who should betray him, and there was no mans inward affection but was foreseen by him. \*From the beginning, whether we understand it from the beginning of the World, as when Christ saith concerning Divorces, *from the beginning it was not so*, that is, from the beginning of the World, from the beginning of the Law of Nature; or from the beginning of their attending him; as it is taken, Luke 1. 2. he had a certain prescience of the inward dispositions of mens hearts, and their succeeding sentiments; he foreknew the treacherous heart of Judas in the midst of his splendid Profession; and discern'd his resolution in the root, and his thought in the confus'd Chaos of his natural corruption; he knew how it would spring up, before it did spring up, before Judas had any distinct and formal conception of it himself, or before there was any actual preparation to a resolve. Peters denial was not unknown to him, when Peter had a present resolution, and no question spake it in the present sincerity of his Soul, *never to forsake him*; he foreknew what would be the result of that Poyson which lurkt in Peters nature, before Peter himself imagin'd any thing of it; he discern'd Peters Apostatizing heart, when Peter resolved the contrary; our Saviours Prediction was accomplisht, and Peters valiant resolution languisht into Cowardice.

Shall we then conclude our Blessed Saviour a Creature, who perfectly and only knew the Father, who knew all Creatures, who had all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledg, who knew the inward motions of mens hearts by his own Vertue, and had not only a present Knowledg, but a Prescience of them?

Inform. 2. The second Instruction from this position, That God hath an infinite Knowledg and Understanding. Then there is a Providence exercis'd by God in the World, and that about every thing. As Providence infers Omniscience as the guide of it; so Omniscience infers Providence as the end of it. What Exercise would there be of this Attribute, but in the Government of the World? To this, this infinite Perfection refers, Jer. 17. 10. *I the Lord search the heart, I try the Reins, to*  
giving



give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. He searches the heart to reward, he rewards every man according to the rewardableness of his actions; his Government therefore extends to every man in the World; there is no heart but he searches, therefore no heart but he governs; to what purpose else would be this Knowledge of all his Creatures? for a meer Contemplation of them? no, What pleasure can that be to God, who knows himself, who is infinitely more excellent than all his Creatures? Doth he know them, to neglect all care of them? this must be either out of Sloth; but how incompatible is laziness to a pure and infinite activity? or out of Majesty, but 'tis no less for the glory of his Majesty to conduct them, than it was for the glory of his Power to erect them into Beings; that counts nothing unworthy of his Arms to make, nothing unworthy of his Understanding to know; why should he count any thing unworthy of his Wisdom to govern? If he knows them, to neglect them, it must be because he hath no Will to it, or no Goodness for it; either of these would be a stain upon God; to want Goodness is to be Evil, and to want Will is to be negligent and scornful, which are inconsistent with an Infinite, Active Goodness. Doth a Father neglect providing for the wants of the Family which he knows? or a Physician the cure of that Disease he understands? God is Omniscient, he therefore sees all things; he is good, he doth not therefore neglect any thing, but conducts it to the end he appointed it. There is nothing so little that can escape his Knowledge, and therefore nothing so little but falls under his Providence; nothing so sublime, as to be above his Understanding; and therefore nothing can be without the compass of his Conduct; nothing can escape his Eye, and therefore nothing can escape his Care; nothing is known by him in vain, as nothing was made by him in vain; there must be acknowledg'd, therefore some end of this knowledge of all his Creatures.

Instruct. 3. Hence then will follow the certainty of a day of Judgment. To what purpose can we imagine this Attribute of Omniscience so often declared and urg'd in Scripture to our consideration, but in order to a government of our practise, and a future Tryal? Every Perfection of the Divine Nature hath sent out brighter Rays in the World, than this of his Infinite Knowledge; his Power hath been seen in the Being of the World, and his Wisdom in the Order and Harmony of the Creatures; his Grace and Mercy hath been plentifully poured out in the mission of a Redeemer; and his Justice hath been elevated by the Dying-Groans of the Son of God upon the Cross. But hath his Omniscience yet met with a Glory proportionable to that of his other Perfections? all the Attributes of God that have appeared in some beautiful glimmerings in the World, wait for a more full manifestation in Glory, as the Creatures do for the manifestation of the Sons of God, Rom. 8. 19. But especially this, since it hath been less evidenced than others, and as much or more abused than any; it expects therefore a publick righting in the eye of the World. There have been indeed some few sparks of this Perfection sensibly struck out now and then in the World, in some horrors of Conscience, which have made men become their own Accusers of unknown Crimes, in bringing out hidden Wickedness to a publick view, by various Providences. This hath also been the design of sprinklings of Judgments upon several Generations, as Psal. 90. 8. *We are consumed by thy Anger, and by thy Wrath we are troubled, thou hast set our Iniquities before thee, and our secret Sins in the light of thy Countenance.* The word *לְעֵינֶיךָ* signifies *Youth*, as well as *secret*, i.e. Sins, committed long ago, and that with secrecy. By this he hath manifested, that secret Sins are not hid from his eye: Tho' inward Terrors and outward Judgments have been let loose to worry men into a belief of this, yet the corruptions of men would still keep a contrary notion in their minds, that God hath forgotten, that he hides his face from Transgression, and will not regard their Impiety, Psal. 10. 11. There must therefore be a time of Tryal for the publick demonstration of this Excellency, that it may receive its due Honour by a full Testimony, that no secrecy can be a shelter from it. As his Justice, which consists in giving every one his due, could not be Glorified, unless men were called to an account for their actions; so neither would his Omniscience appear in its illustrious colours, without such a manifestation of the secret motions of mens hearts, and of Villanies done under Lock and Key, when none were conscious



scious to them, but the committers of them. Nowv the last Judgment is the time appointed for the *opening of the Books*, Dan. 7.10. The Book of Gods Records, and Conscience the counter-part, were never fully opened and read before, only novv and then some some pages turn'd to, in particular Judgments; and out of those *Books shall men be judged according to their Works*, Rev. 20. 12. Then shall the defaced Sins be brought vvith all their circumstances to every mans memory; the Counsels of mens hearts fled far from their present remembrance; all the habitual knowvledg they had of their ovvn actions, shall by Gods knowvledg of them be excited to an actual revievv; and their vvorks not only made manifest to themselves, but notorious to the World: All the Words, Thoughts, Deeds of men shall be brought forth into the light of their ovvn minds, by the infinite Light of Gods understanding reflecting on them. His Knowvledg renders him an unerring Witness, as vvell as his Justice a *swift Witness*, Mal. 3. 5. a *svvift Witness*, because he shall vvithout any circuit, or length of Speech, convince their Consciences by an invvard illumination of them, to take notice of the blackness and deformity of their hearts and vvorks. In all Judgments God is somevwhat knowvn to be the searcher of hearts; the time of Judgment is the time of his remembrance, *Hos. 8. 13.* Now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins; but the great instant, or *now*, of the full glorifying it, is the grand day of account. This Attribute must have a time for its full Discovery; and no time can be fit for it, but a time of a general reckoning. Justice cannot be exercis'd without *Omniscience*; for as Justice is a giving to every one his due, so there must be knowledg to discern what is due to every man; the *searching the heart* is in order to the *rewarding the works*.

4. *This Perfection in God, gives us ground to believe a Resurrection.* Who can think this too hard for his Power, since not the least Atome of the Dust of our Bodies can escape his Knowledg? An infinite Understanding comprehends every mite of a departed Carcass; this will not appear impossible nor irrational to any upon a serious consideration of this excellency in God: The body is perished, the matter of it hath been since clothed with different forms and figures; part of it hath been made the body of a Worm, part of it returned to the Dust that hath been blown away by the Wind, part of it hath been concocted in the Bodies of *Cannibals*, Fish, ravenous Beasts; the Spirits have evaporated into Air, part of the Blood melted into Water; what then, is the matter of the body annihilated? is that wholly perished? no, the foundation remains, tho' it hath put on variety of forms; the Body of *Abel*, the first man that died, nor the body of *Adam*, are not to thisday reduc'd to nothing; Indeed the quantity and the quality of those bodies, have been lost by various changes they have past through since their dissolution; but the matter or substance of them remains intire, and is not capable to be destroy'd by all those transforming alterations, in so long a revolution of Time.

The body of a man in his infancy and his old Age, if it were *Methuselah's*, is the same in the foundation in those multitude of years; tho' the quantity of it be alter'd, the quality different, tho' the colour and other things be changed in it; the matter of this body remains the same among all the alterations after Death. And can it be so mixed with other Natures and Creatures, as that it is past finding out by an *Infinite Understanding*? Can any particle of this matter escape the eye of him that makes and beholds all those various alterations, and where every mite of the substance of those bodies is particularly lodged; so as that he cannot compact it together again for a habitation of that Soul, that many a year before fled from it? \* Since the Knowledg of God is infinite, *Daille Serm.* and his Providence extensive over the least as well as the greatest parts of *15. p. 21. 22,* the World; he must needs know the least as well as the greatest of his Creatures in their Beginning, Progress and Dissolution; all the forms through which the Bodies of all Creatures roul, the particular instants of time, and the particular place when and where those changes are made, they are all present with him; and therefore when the Revolution of time allotted by him for the reunion of Souls and Deceased Bodies is come, it cannot be doubted but out of the Treasures of his Knowledg he can call forth every part of the matter of the Bodies of men, from the first to the last man that expired, and strip it of all



all those forms and figures, which it shall then have, to compact it to be a lodging for that Soul which before it entertain'd; and tho' the Bodies of men have been devour'd by Wild Beasts in the Earth, and Fish in the Sea, and been lodg'd in the Stomachs of Barbarous Men-eaters, the matter is not lost. There is but little of the Food we take, that is turned into the substance of our own bodies; that which is not proper for nourishment, which is the greatest part, is separated and concocted, and rejected; whatsoever objections are made, are answered by this Attribute. Nothing hinders a God of Infinite Knowledge from discerning every particle of the matter, wheresoever it is dispos'd; and since he hath an eye to discern, and a hand to recollect and unite, what difficulty is there in believing this Article of the Christian Faith? he that questions this reveal'd Truth of the Resurrection of the Body, must question Gods Omniscience as well as his Omnipotence and Power.

5. *What semblance of reason is there to expect a justification in the sight of God by any thing in our selves.* Is there any action done by any of us, but upon a scrutiny we may find flaws and deficiency in it? What then? shall not this Perfection of God discern them? the moles that escape our eyes cannot escape his, 1 John 3. 20. *God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things*; so that it is in vain for any man to flatter himself with the rectitude of any work; or enter into any debate with him who can bring a Thousand Articles against us, out of his own Infinite Records unknown to us, and unanswerable by us. If Conscience, a Representative or Counterpart of Gods Omniscience in our own Bosoms, find nothing done by us, but in a Copy short of the Original, and beholds, if not blurs, yet Imperfections in the best actions, God must much more discern them; we never knew a Copy equally exact with the Original; If our own Conscience be as a Thousand Witnesses, the Knowledge of God is as Millions of Witnesses against us: If our Corruption be so great, and our Holiness so low in our own eyes, how much greater must the one, and how much meaner must the other appear in the eyes of God? God hath an unerring Eye to see, as well as an unspotted Holiness to hate, and an unbribable Justice to punish; he wants no more Understanding to know the shortness of our actions, than he doth Holiness to enact, and Power to execute his Laws: Nay, suppose we could recollect many actions, wherein there were no spot visible to us; the consideration of this Attribute should scare us from resting upon any or all of them; since it is the Lord that by a piercing eye sees and judges according to the heart, and not according to appearance. The least crookedness of a Stick, not sensible to an acute eye, yet will appear when laid to the Line; and the impurity of a Counterfeit Metal be manifest when applyed to the Touchstone; so will the best action of any meer man in the World, when it comes to be measur'd in Gods Knowledge by the strait Line of his Law.

Let every man therefore, as *Paul*, though he should know nothing by himself, think not himself therefore justified; Since it is the Lord, who is of an infinite Understanding, that judgeth, 1 Cor. 4. 4. A man may be justified in his own sight, but not any living man can be justified, in the sight of God, Psal. 143. 2. in his Sight, whose eye pierceth into our unknown secrets and frames: It was therefore well answered of a good man upon his Death-bed, being ask't *What he was afraid of?* *I have laboured* (saith he) *with all my strength to observe the commands of God; but since I am a man, I am ignorant whether my works are acceptable to God, since God Judges in one manner, and I in another manner.* Let the consideration therefore of this Attribute, make us join with *Job* in his Resolution, Job 9. 21. *tho' we were perfect, yet would we not know our own Souls.* I would not stand up to Plead any of my vertues before God. Let us therefore look after another Righteousness, wherein the exact eye of the Divine Omniscience, we are sure, can discern no stain or crookedness.

6. *What honourable and adoring Thoughts ought we to have of God for this Perfection?* Do we not honour a man that is able to Predict; Do we not think it a great part of Wisdom? Have not all Nations regarded such a faculty, as a character and a mark of Divinity? There is something more ravishing in the know-



knowledg of future things, both to the person that knows them, and the person that hears them, than there is in any other kind of knowledg; whence the greatest Prophets have been accounted in the greatest veneration, and men have thought it a way to glory to Divine and Predict: Hence it was that the *Devils* and *Pagan* Oracles gained so much Credit; upon this Foundation were they established, and the Enemies of Mankind owned for a true God; I say, from the Prediction of future things, tho' their Oracles were often ambiguous, many times false; yet those poor Heathens framed many ingenious excuses, to free their Adored Gods from the charge of falsity and imposture: And shall we not adore the true God, the God of *Israel*, the God Blessed for ever, for this incommunicable Property, whereby he flies above the Wings of the Wind, the understandings of men and Cherubims?

\* Consider how great it is to know the Thoughts and Intentions, and Works of one man, from the beginning to the end of his life; to foreknow all these before the Being of this man, when he was lodged afar off in the Loyns of his Ancestors, yea of *Adam*; how much greater is it to foreknow and know the Thoughts and Works of three or four men of a whole *Village* or Neighbourhood? 'Tis greater still to know the imaginations and actions of such a *multitude* of men as are contained in *London*, *Paris*, or *Constantinople*; how much greater still to know the intentions and practises, the clandestine contrivances of so many *Millions*, that have, do, or shall swarm in all quarters of the World, every person of them having Millions of Thoughts, Desires, Designs, Affections and Actions!

*Sabund. Theol. natural. Tit. 84. somewhat changed.*

Let this Attribute then make the Blessed God honourable in our eyes, and adorable in all our affections; especially since it is an Excellency which hath so lately discovered it self, in bringing to Light the hidden things of darkness, in opening, and in part confounding the wicked Devices of Bloody men. Especially let us adore God for it, and admire it in God, since it is so necessary a Perfection, that without it the goodness of God had been impotent, and could not have relieved us; for what help can a distressed person expect from a man of the sweetest disposition and the strongest arm, if the eyes which should discover the danger, and direct the defence and rescue, were closed up by blindness and darkness? Adore God for this wonderful Perfection.

7. In the consideration of this excellent Attribute, what low thoughts should we have of our own knowledg, and how humble ought we to be before God? There's nothing man is more apt to be proud of than his Knowledg; 'tis a Perfection he glories in; but if our own Knowledg of the little outside and barks of things, puffs us up, the consideration of the infiniteness of Gods Knowledg should abate the Tumor: As our Beings are nothing in regard to the infiniteness of his Essence, so our Knowledg is nothing in regard of the vastness of his understanding: We have a spark of Being, but nothing to the heat of the Sun: We have a drop of Knowledg, but nothing to the Divine Ocean. What a vain thing is it for a shallow Brook to boast of its Streams before a Sea, whose depths are unfathomable? As it is a vanity to brag of our Strength when we remember the Power of God; and of our Prudence, when we glance upon the Wisdom of God; so 'tis no less a vanity to boast of our Knowledg, when we think of the Understanding and Knowledg of God.

How hard is it for us to know *any thing*\*? too much noise deafs us, and too much light dazels us; too much distance alienates the object from us, and too much nearness bars up our sight from beholding it: When we think our selves to be near the knowledg of a thing, as a *Ship* to the Haven, a puff of Wind blows us away, and the object which we desired to know, eternally flies from us; we burn with a desire of knowledg, and yet are oppressed with the darkness of ignorance; we spend our days more in dark *Egypt*, than in enlightened *Goshen*. In what narrow bounds is all the knowledg of the most intelligent persons included? \* How few understand the exact Harmony of their own bodies, the nature of the life they have in common with other Animals? who understands the nature of his own faculties, how he Knows, and how he Wills, how the Understanding Proposeth, and how the Will embraceth, how his spiritual Soul is united to his material Body, what the nature is of the operation of our Spirits? nay, who understands the nature of his own body,

*Amvram. de prædest. p. 116. 117. somewhat changed.*



dy, the offices of his senses, the motion of his Members, how they come to obey the command of the Will, and a Thousand other things? What a vain, weak, and ignorant thing is man, when compar'd with God? yet there is not a greater Pride to be found among Devils, than among ignorant men with a little, very little flashy knowledg. Ignorant man is as proud, as if he knew as God!

As the consideration of Gods *Omniscience* should render him *honourable* in our eyes, so it should render us *vile* in our own. God, because of his knowledg, is so far from disdaining his Creatures, that his Omniscience is a Minister to his Goodness: No knowledg that we are possess'd of, should make us swell with too high a conceit of our selves, and a disdain of others. We have infinitely more of ignorance than knowledg. Let us therefore remember in all our thoughts of God, that he is God, and we are men; and therefore ought to be humble, as becomes men, and ignorant and foolish men to be; as weak Creatures should lie low before an Almighty God, and impure Creatures before a Holy God, false Creatures before a Faithful God, finite Creatures before an Infinite God; so should ignorant Creatures before an All-Knowing God. All Gods Attributes teach admiring thoughts of God, and low thoughts of our selves.

8. It may inform us, *how much this Attribute is injured in the World.* The first error after *Adams* eating the forbidden Fruit, was the denial of this, as well as the Omnipresence of God, *Gen. 3. 10. I heard thy voice in the Garden, and I hid myself;* as if the thicknes of the Trees could screen him from the eye of his Creator. And after *Cains* Murder, this is the first Perfection he affronts, *Gen. 4. 9. Where is Abel thy Brother,* saith God? How roundly doth he answer, *I know not?* as if God were as weak as man, to be put off with a Lye: Man doth as naturally hate this Perfection as much, as he cannot naturally but acknowledg it; he wishes God stript of this eminency, that he might be incapable to be an inspector of his Crimes, and a searcher of the Closets of his heart: In wishing him deprived of this, there is a hatred of God himself; for it is a loathing an Essential Property of God, without which he would be a pitiful Governor of the World. What a kind of God should that be, of a Sinners wishing, that had wanted Eyes to see a Crime, and Righteousness to punish it? The want of the consideration of this Attribute, is the cause of all Sin in the World, *Hos. 7. 2. they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their Wickedness;* they speak not to their hearts, nor make any reflection upon the infiniteness of my Knowledg; 'tis a high contempt of God, as if he were an *Idol*, a senseless Stock or Stone; in all evil practices this is denyed: We know God sees all things, yet we live and vvalk as if he knew nothing: We call him Omniscient, and live as if he were ignorant; we say he is all eye, yet act as if he were wholly blind.

In particular, this Attribute is injured, By invading the peculiar rights of it, by presuming on it, and by a practical denial of it.

1. By invading the peculiar rights of it.

1. By invocation of Creatures. Praying to Saints, by the *Romanists*, is a disparagement to this Divine Excellency; he that knows all things, is only fit to have the Petitions of men presented to him; Prayer supposeth an Omniscient Being, as the object of it; no other Being but God ought to have that honour acknowledged to it; no Understanding but his, is infinite; no other Presence but his, is every where; to implore any deceased Creature for a supply of our wants, is to ovvn in them a Property of the Deity; and make them Deities that were but men; and increase their Glory by a diminution of Gods Honour, in ascribing that Perfection to Creatures which belongs only to God. Alas! they are so far from understanding the desires of our Souls, that they know not the words of our Lips: 'Tis against reason to address our Supplications to them that neither understand us, nor discern us, *Isa. 63. 16. Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledges us not.* The *Jews* never called upon *Abraham*, tho' the Covenant was made with him for the vvhole Seed; not one departed Saint for the vvhole *Four Thousand Years* betveen the Creation of the World, and the coming of *Christ*, was ever Prayed to by the *Israelites*; or ever imagin'd to have a share in Gods Omniscience; so that to pray to *St. Peter*, *St. Paul*, much less to *St. Roch*, *St. Swithin*, *St. Martin*, *St. Francis*, &c. is such a Superstition that hath no footing in the Scripture.



\* To desire the Prayers of the Living, with whom we have a Communion, who can understand and grant our desires, is founded upon a mutual Charity; but to implore persons that are absent, at a great distance from us, with whom we have not, nor know how to have any Commerce, supposeth them in their departure to have put off Humanity, and commenc'd Gods, and endued with some part of the Divinity to understand our Petitions; we are indeed to cherish their Memories, consider their Examples, imitate their Graces, and observe their Doctrines; we are to follow them as Saints, but not elevate them as Gods, in ascribing to them such a knowledg which is only the necessary right of their and our common Creator: As the invocation of Saints mingles them with Christ in the exercise of his Office, so it sets them equal with God in the Throne of his Omniscience. As if they had as much credit with God, as Christ in a way of Mediation; and as much knowledg of mens affairs, as God himself. Omniscience is peculiar to God, and incommunicable to any Creature; 'tis the foundation of all Religion, and therefore one of the choicest acts of it, viz. *Prayer and Invocation*. To direct our Vows and Petitions to any else, is to invade the peculiarity of this Perfection in God, and to rank some Creatures in a Partnership with him in it.

2. *This Attribute is injured by curiosity of Knowledg.* Especially of future things, which God hath not discovered in natural causes, or supernatural Revelation. 'Tis a common error of mens Spirits to aspire to know what God would have hidden, and to pry into Divine Secrets; and many men are more willing to remain without the knowledg of those things which may with a little industry be attained, than be divested of the curiosity of enquiring into those things which are above their reach; 'tis hence that some have laid aside the Study of the common remedies of Nature, to find out the *Philosophers Stone*; which scarce any ever yet attempted, but sunk in the Enterprize. \* From this inclination to know the most abstruse and difficult things it is, that the horrors of *Magick*, and the vanities of *Astrology* have sprung, whereby men have thought to find in a commerce with Devils and the Jurisdiction of the Stars, the events of their Lives, and the disposal of States and Kingdoms. Hence also arose those Multitudes of ways of Divination invented among the Heathen, and practis'd too commonly in these Ages of the World. This is an invasion of Gods Prerogative, to whom secret things belong, *Dent. 29. 29. Secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but revealed things belong to us and our Children.* 'Tis an intollerable boldness to attempt to fathom those, the knowledg whereof God hath reserved to himself; and to search that which God will have to surpass our Understandings; whereby we more truly envy God a knowledg superior to our own, than we in *Adam* imagin'd that he envied us. Ambition is the greatest cause of this, Ambition to be accounted some great thing among men, by reason of a Knowledg estrang'd from the common mass of mankind; but more especially that soaring Pride to be equal with God, which lurks in our nature ever since the Fall of our first Parents: This is not yet laid aside by man, though it was the *first* thing that embroyld the World with the Wrath of God. Some think a curiosity of Knowledg was the cause of the fall of Devils; I am sure it was the foyl of *Adam*, and is yet the Crime of his Posterity; had he been contented to know what God had furnisht him with, neither he nor his Posterity had smarted under the Venom of the Serpents Breath.

All curious and bold enquiries into things not revealed, are an attempt upon the Throne of God; and are both sinful and pernicious, like to glaring upon the Sun; where instead of a greater acuteness, we meet with blindness, and too dearly buy our ignorance in attempting a superfluous knowledg. As Gods Knowledg is destin'd to the government of the World, so should ours be to the advantage of the World, and not degenerate into vain speculations.

3. *This Attribute is injur'd by swearing by Creatures:* To swear by the Name of God in a Righteous Cause, \* when we are lawfully call'd to it by a Superior Power,

*Dalke Melang.  
part 2. p. 100  
761.*

*Amyraut. 2. 26.  
ral. Tom. 3.  
P. 75. 66.*

*Cajetan. Sum.  
P. 190.*



Power, or for the necessary decision of some Controversy, for the ends of Charity and Justice, is an act of Religion, *and a part of Worship*, founded upon, and directed to the honour of this Attribute; by it we acknowledge the glory of his infallible Knowledge of all things; but to Swear by false Gods, or by any Creature, is Blasphemous; it sets the Creature in the place of God, and invests it in that which is the peculiar honour of the Divinity; for when any swear truly, they intend the invocation of an infallible Witness, and the bringing an undoubted Testimony for what they do assert: While any therefore Swear by a Creature, or a false God, they profess that that Creature, or that which they esteem to be a God, is an infallible Witness, which to be, is only the right of God; they attribute to the Creature that which is the Property of God alone, to know the Heart, and to be a Witness whether they speak true or no; and this was accounted by all Nations the true Design of an Oath. As to Swear falsely, is a plain denial of the All-Knowledge of God; so to Swear by any Creature, is to set the Creature upon the Throne of God, in ascribing that Perfection to the Creature, which Sovereignly belongs to the Creator; for it is not in the Power of any to Witness to the truth of the heart, but of him that is the searcher of hearts.

4. We Sin against this Attribute *by censuring the hearts of others*. An open Crime indeed falls under our Cognizance, and therefore under our Judgment; for whatsoever falls under the Authority of man to be punished, falls under the Judgment of man to be censured, as an act contrary to the Law of God; yet when a censure is built upon the evil of the act which is obvious to the view, if we take a step farther to judge the heart and state, we leave the revealed rule of the Law, and ambitiously erect a Tribunal equal with Gods; and usurp a Judicial Power, pertaining only to the Supreme Governour of the World; and consequently pretend to be possessors of this Perfection of *Omniscience*, which is necessary to render him capable of the exercise of that Sovereign Authority. For it is in respect of his Dominion, that God hath the supreme right to Judge; and in respect of his Knowledge that he hath an incommunicable capacity to Judge.

In an action that is doubtful, the good or evil whereof depends only upon Gods determination, and wherein much of the Judgment depends upon the discerning the intention of the Agent, we cannot Judge any man without a manifest invasion of Gods peculiar right; such actions are to be Tried by Gods knowledge, not by our surmises; God only is the Master in such cases, *to whom a person stands or falls*, Rom. 14. 4. Till the true Principle and ends of an action be known by the confession of the party acting it, a true Judgment of it is not in our Power. Principles and Ends lye deep and hid from us; and it is intollerable Pride to pretend to have a joint Key with God to open that Cabinet which he hath reserved to himself.

Besides the violation of the Rule of Charity in misconstruing actions which may be great and generous in their root and principle, we invade Gods Right, as if our ungrounded imaginations and conjectures were in joint Commission with this Sovereign Perfection; and thereby we become Usurping Judges of evil thoughts, James 2. 4. 'Tis therefore a boldness worthy to be punished by the Judge, to assume to our selves the Capacity and Authority of him who is the only Judge. For as the Execution of the Divine Law for the inward violation of it, belongs only to God, so is the right of Judging a Prerogative belonging only to his *Omniscience*; his Right is therefore invaded, if we pretend to a knowledge of it. This Humor of men the Apostle checks, when he saith, 1 Cor. 4. 5. *He that judgeth me is the Lord, therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will manifest the Counsels of all hearts*. 'Tis not the time yet for God to erect the Tribunal for the tryal of mens hearts, and the Principles of their Actions; He hath reserv'd the glorious discovery of this Attribute for another season; We must not therefore presume to Judge of the Counsels of mens hearts, till God hath reveal'd them by opening the Treasures of his own Knowledge.

Much



much less are we to judge any Mans final Condition. *Manasseh* may Sacrifice to Devils, and unconverted *Paul* tear the Church in pieces; but God had Mercy on them and called them. The Action may be Censur'd, not the State, for we know not whom God may call. In Censuring Men, we may doubly imitate the Devil, in a false accusation of the Brethren, as well as in an ambitious usurpation of the Rights of God.

2. This Perfection is injured, by presuming upon it, or making an ill use of it. As in the neglect of Prayer for the supply of Men's wants, because God knows them already, so that that which is an encouragement to Prayer, they make the reason of restraining it before God. Prayer is not to administer knowledge to God, but to acknowledge this admirable Perfection of the Divine Nature. If God did not know, there were indeed no use of Prayer, it would be as vain a thing to send up our Prayers to Heaven, as to implore the senseless Statue or Picture of a Prince for a Protection. We Pray because God knows, for though he know our wants with a knowledge of Vision, yet he will not know them with a knowledge of supply, till he be sought unto. All the Excellencies of God are ground of Adoration; and this Excellency is the ground of that part of Worship we call Prayer. If God be to be Worshipped, he is to be called upon; *Invocations of his name* in our necessities is a chief act of Worship; whence the Temple, the place of solemn Worship, was not called the House of Sacrifice, but the House of Prayer. \* Mat. 6. 32.  
33.  
Matth. 7. 11.

Prayer was not appointed for Gods information, as if he were ignorant, but for the expression of our desires; not to furnish him with a knowledge of what we want, but to manifest to him by some Rational Sign convenient to our Nature, our sense of that want, which he knows by himself. So that Prayer is not design'd to acquaint God with our wants, but to express the desire of a Remedy of our wants. God knows our wants, but hath not made promises barely to our wants, but to our asking: That his Omniscience in hearing as well as his sufficiency in supplying, may have a sensible honour in our acknowledgments and receipts. 'Tis therefore an ill use of this Excellency of God to neglect Prayer to him as needless, because he knows already.

4. This Perfection of God is wrong'd, by a practical denial of it. 'Tis the language of every Sin, and so God takes it when he comes to reckon with Men for their Impieties. Upon this he charges the greatness of the iniquity of *Israel*, the overflowing of Blood in the Land, and the perverseness of the City; *They say the Lord hath forsaken the Earth, and the Lord sees not*: \* *Ezek. 9. 9.* They deny his Eyes to see, and his Resolution to punish.

1. It will appear, in forbearing Sin from a sense of Mans knowledge, not of Gods. Open Impieties are refrain'd because of the Eye of Man; but secret Sins are not checked because of the Eye of God. Wickedness is committed in darkness, that is restrained in light; as if darkness were as great a clog to Gods Eyes as it is to ours; as though his Eyes were muffled with the Curtains of the Night\*. This it is likely was at the root of *Jonah's* flight, he might have some secret thought, that his Masters Eye could not follow him, as though the close Hatches of a Ship could secure him from the knowledge of God, as well as the Sides of the Ship could from the dashing of the Waves. What lies most upon the Conscience when it is graciously wounded, is least regarded, or contemned when it is basely inclin'd. *David's* heart smote him not only for his Sin in the gross, but as particularly circumstantiated by the commission of it in the sight of God; *Psal. 51. 4. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.* None knew the reason of *Uriah's* Death but my self, and because others knew it not, I neglected any regard to this Divine Eye. When *Jacob's* Sons used their Brother *Joseph* so barbarously,



roully, they took care to hide it from their *Father* ; but cast away all thoughts of God, from whom it could not be conceal'd.

Doth not the presence of a Child bridle a Man, from the act of a long'd for Sin, when the Eye of God is of no force to restrain him? as if Gods knowledge were of less value than the sight of a little Boy or Girl, as if a Child only could see, and God were blind. He that will forbear an unworthy action for fear of an Informer, will not forbear it for God ; as if Gods *Omniscience*, were not as full an Intelligencer to Him, as Man can be an Informer to a Magistrate. As we acknowledge the power of Men seeing us, when we are ashamed to commit a filthy action in their view ; so we discover the power of God seeing us, when we regard not what we do before the light of his Eyes. Secret Sins are more against God than open : Open Sins are against the Law, secret Sins, are against the Law and this prime Perfection of his Nature. The Majesty of God is not only violated, but the Omniscience of God disown'd, who is the only Witness ; We must in all of them, either imagine him to be without Eyes to behold us, or without an Arm of Justice to punish us. And often it is, I believe, in such cases, that if any thoughts of Gods knowledge strike upon Men, they quickly damp them, lest they should begin to know what they fear, and fear that they might not eat their pleasant Sinful Morfels.

2. It appears, in *partial Confessions of Sin before God*. As by a free, full, and ingenuous Confession, we offer a due glory to this Attribute, so by a feigned and curtail'd Confession, we deny him the honour of it : For though by any Confession we in part own him to be a Sovereign and Judge, yet by a half and pared acknowledgment, we own him to be no more than a Humane and ignorant one. *Achans* full Confession gave God the glory of his Omniscience, manifested in the discovery of his secret Crime. And *Josuah* said to *Achan*, *My Son give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make Confession unto him*. And so *Psal.* 50. 23. *Who so offereth praise glorifieth me, or confession*, as the word signifieth, in which sense I would rather take it, referring to this Attribute, which God seems to tax Sinners with the denial of, *Verf.* 21. telling them that he would open the Records of their Sins before them, and indite them particularly for every one. If therefore you would glorify this Attribute, which shall one day break open your Consciences, offer to me a *sincere Confession*. When *David* speaks of the *happines*s of a pardon'd Man, \* he adds, *in whose Spirit there is no guile*, not meaning a sincerity in general, but an ingenuity in Confessing. To excuse or extenuate Sin, is to deny God the knowledge of the depths of our deceitful hearts : When we will mince it rather than aggravate it ; lay it upon the inducements of others, when it was the free act of our own wills, study shifts to deceive our Judge, this is to *speak lies of him*, as the expression is, *Hos.* 7. 13. as though he were a God easie to be cheated, and knew no more than we are willing to declare. What did *Sauls* transferring his Sin from himself to the *People*, \* but charge God with a defect in this Attribute? When Man could not be like God in his knowledge, he would fancy a God like to him in his ignorance ; and imagine a possibility of hiding himself from his knowledge. And all Men tread more or less in their Fathers steps, and are fruitful to devise distinctions to disguise Errors in Doctrine, and excuses to palliate Errors in Practice : This Crime *Job* removes from himself, when he speaks of several acts of his sincerity ; *If I cover'd my transgression as Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom*. I hid not any of my Sins in my own Conscience, but acknowledg'd God a Witness to them, and gave him the glory of his knowledge by a free Confession. I did not conceal it from God as *Adam* did, or as Men ordinarily do ; as if God could understand no more of their secret Crimes, than they will let him, and had no more sense of their faults, than they would furnish him with. As the first rise of Confession is the owning of this Attribute ( for the Justice of God would

\* *Josh.* 7. 19.

\* *Pf.* 2. 1. 2.  
Camero, p.  
89. col. 1.

\* *1 Sam.* 15.  
25.

\* *Job* 31. 33.



would not scare Men, nor the Holiness of God awe them without a sense of his knowledge of their iniquities ) so to drop out some fragments of Confession, discover some Sins and conceal others, is a plain denial of the extensiveness of the Divine Knowledge.

3. It is discover'd, *by putting God off with an outside Worship.* Men are often flatterers of God, and think to bend him by formal glaving Devotions, without the concurrence of their hearts ; as though he could not pierce into the darkness of the Mind, but did as little know us as one Man knows another. There are such things as *feigned Lips* \*, a contradiction between the Heart and the Tongue, a clamour in the Voice, and scoffing in the Soul ; a crying to God, thou art *my Father, the guide of my youth* and yet speaking and *doing evil to the utmost* of our power \*. As if God could be impos'd upon by fawning pretences ; and like old Isaac, take Jacob for Esau, and be couzend by the smell of his Garments : As if he could not discern the Negro heart under an Angels Garb. Thus Ephraim, the Ten Tribes, apostatized from the true Religion, would go with their *Flocks* and their *Herds* to seek the Lord \*, would Sacrifice multitudes of Sheep and Heifers, which was the main outside of the Jewish Religion ; only with their Flocks and their Herds, not with their Hearts, with those inward qualifications of deep Humiliation and Repentance for Sin : As though outside appearances limited Gods observation, whereas God had told them before, That he *knew Ephraim and Israel* *was not hid from him.* Thus to do is to put a cheat upon God, and think to blind his All-seeing Eye, and therefore it is called *deceit*, Psal. 78. 36. They did flatter him with their Mouths ; The word *הָרַג* signifies to deceive as well as to flatter ; not that they or any else can deceive God, but it implies an endeavour to deceive him, by a few dissembling words and gestures, or an imagination that God was satisfied with bare professions, and would not concern himself in a further inquisition : This is an unworthy conceit of God, to fancy that we can satisfy for inward Sins, and avert approaching Judgments, by External Offerings, by a loud Voice with a false Heart, as if God, (like Children) would be pleas'd, with the glittering of an empty Shell, or the ratling of Stones, the chinking of Money, a meer Voice and crying without inward frames and intentions of service.

\* Psal. 17. 11

\* Jer. 3. 4. 5

\* Hof. 5. 6

verse 3:

4. *In cherishing multitudes of evil thoughts.* No Man but would blush for shame, if the base, impure, slovenly thoughts, either in or out of Duties of Worship were visible to the understanding of Man ; how diligent would he be to curb his luxuriant and unworthy fancies, as well as bite in his words ; but when we give the Rains to the Motions of our Hearts, and suffer them to run at random without a Curb, 'tis an evidence we are not concern'd for their falling under the notice of the Eye of God ; and it argues a very weak belief of this Perfection, or scarce any belief at all. Who can think any Mans heart possessed with a sense of this Infinite Excellency, that suffers his Mind, in his Meditations on God, to wander into every Sty, and be picking up Stones upon a Dunghill ? What doth it intimate, but that those thoughts are as invisible, or unaudible to God, as they are to Men without the Garments of Words ? \* When a Man thinks of obscene things, his own natural Notions, if reviv'd, would tell him, that God discerns what he thinks, that the depths of his heart are open to him : And the voice of those Notions are, Deface those vain imaginations out of your Minds. But what is done ? Men cast away Rational Light, muster up Conceits, that God sees them not, knows them not, and so sink into the Puddle of their sordid Imaginations, as though they remained in darkness to God.

\* Drexel Nicetas, lib. 2. cap. 10. p. 357.

I might further instance.

In *omissions of Prayer*, which arise sometime from a flat Atheism : Who will call upon a God, that believes no such Being ? Or from partial Atheism,



either a denial of Gods sufficiency to help, or of his Omniscience to know, as if God were like the Statue of *Jupiter in Crete* framed without Ears.

In the *Hypocritical pretences of Men*, to exempt them from the service God calls them to. When Men pretend one thing, and intend another; this lurks in the Veins sometimes of the best Men; sometimes it ariseth from the fear of Man; when Men are more afraid of the power of Man, than of dissembling with the Almighty: It will pretend a virtue to cover a secret wile: and Choose the *Tongue of the Crafty*, as the Expression in *Job* \*.

The case is plain in *Moses*, who when ordered to undertake an eminent Service, pretends a want of Eloquence, and an ungrateful *slowness of Speech* \*.

This generous Soul, that before was not afraid to discover himself in the midst of *Egypt* for his Country-men, answers sneakingly to God, and would veil his carnal fear, with a pretence of insufficiency and humility; *Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh* \*?

He could not well alledge an inability to go to *Pharaoh*, since he had had an Education in the *Egyptian* Learning, which render'd him capable to appear at Court. God at last uncafeeth him, and shews it all to be a dissimulation, and whatsoever was the pretence, fear lay at the bottom: He was afraid of his Life upon his appearance before *Pharaoh*, from whose face he had fled upon the slaying the *Egyptian*, which God intimates to him, *Exod. 4. 19. Go, and return into Egypt, for all the Men are dead which sought thy life.* What doth this Carriage speak, but as if Gods Eye were not upon our inward parts, as though we could lock him out of our hearts, that cannot be shut out from any creek of the hearts of Men and Angels.

2. The second Use is of *Comfort*. 'Tis a ground of great Comfort under the *present dispensation* wherein we are; \* We have heard the *Doctrinal* part, and God hath given us the *Experimental* part of it in his special Providence this day, upon the Stage of the World. And blessed be God that he hath given us a ground of Comfort, without going out of our ordinary course to fetch it, whereby it seems to be peculiarly of Gods ordering for us.

\* Nov. 1678.  
When the Po-  
pish Plot was  
discover'd.

1. 'Tis a Comfort in all the clandestine contrivances of Men against the Church. His Eyes pierce as far as the depths of Hell: Not one of his Churches Adversaries lies in a mist, all are as plain as the Stars which he numbers; *Mine Adversaries are all before thee* \*, More exactly known to thee, than I can recount them. 'Tis a Prophecie of Christ, wherein Christ is brought in speaking to God, of his own and the Churches Enemies: He comforts himself with this, that God hath his Eye upon every particular Person among his Adversaries: He knows where they repose themselves, when they go out to Consult, and when they come in with their Resolves: He discerns all the Rage that Spirits their Hearts, in what corner it lurks, how it acts; all the disorders, motions of it, and every Object of that Rage; He cannot be deceived by the closest and subtlest Person. Thus God speaks concerning *Zenachib* and his Host against *Jerusalem* \*. After he had spoke of the forming of his Church, and the weakness of it, he adds, *But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy Rage against me; because thy Rage against me, and thy Tumult is come up into mine Ears, therefore will I put my Hook in thy Nose, and my Bridle in thy Lips, and I will turn thee back, &c.* He knows all the methods of the Counsels, the Stages they had laid, the manner of the Execution of their Designs, all the ways whither they turned themselves, and would use them no better than Men do devouring Fish and untam'd Beasts, with a Hook in the Nose and a Bridle in the Mouth. Those States-men in *Isa. 29. 15.* thought their Contrivances too deep for God to fathom, and too close for God to frustrate; *They seek deep to hide their Counsels from the Lord; surely your turning of things upside down, shall be esteemed as the Potters Clay, of no more force and understanding, than a Potters Vessel, which understands not its own form wrought by the*

\* Isa. 69. 19.

\* Isa. 37. 28.  
29.

Artificer,



Artificer, nor the use it is put to by the Buyer and Possessor ; or shall be esteemed as a Potters Vessel, that can be as easily flung back into the Mass from whence it was taken, as preserved in the Figure it is now endued with. No secret Designer is shrowded from Gods sight, or can be shelter'd from Gods Arm ; He understands the Venom of their Hearts, better than we can feel it, and discovers their inward fury more plainly, than we can see the Sting or Teeth of a Viper when they are opened for mischief ; and to what purpose doth God know and see them, but in order to deliver his People from them in his own due time ; *I know their sorrow, and am come down to deliver them* \* : The Walls of Jerusalem are continually before him, he knows therefore all that would undermine and demolish them ; None can hurt Zion by any ignorance or inadvertency in God.

\* Ex. 3. 7, 8.

'Tis observable, that our Saviour assuming to himself a different Title in every Epistle to the Seven Churches, doth particularly ascribe to himself this of Knowledge and Wrath in that to Thyatira, an Emblem or Description of the Romish State : \* *And unto the Angel of the Church of Thyatira write, These things saith the Son of God, who hath his Eyes like to a flame of Fire, and his Feet like fine Brasse.* His Eyes, like a flame of Fire are of a piercing nature, insinuating themselves into all the Pores and parts of the Body they encounter with, and his Feet like Brasse to crush them with, is explained, *Verse 23. I will kill her Children with Death, and all the Churches shall know that I am he which searches the Reins and the Heart, and I will give to everyone of you according to your works.* He knows every design of the Romish Party, design'd by that Church of Thyatira \*. *Jezabel*, there, signifies a whorish Church, such a Church as shall act as *Jezabel*, *Ahab's Wife*, who was not only a Worshipper of Idols, but propagated Idolatry in Israel, slew the Prophets, persecuted *Elijah*, murdered *Naboth*, the Name whereof signifies Prophecy, seiz'd upon his Possession. And if it be said that *Verse 19.* this Church was commended for her Works, Faith, Patience ; 'tis true Rome did at first strongly profess Christianity, and maintain'd the interest of it, but afterwards fell into the practice of *Jezabel*, and committed Spiritual Adultery : And is she to be owned for a Wife, that now plays the Harlot, because she was honest and modest at her first Marriage ; \* And though she shall be destroy'd, yet not speedily, *Verse 22. I will cast her into a Bed,* seems to intimate the destruction of *Jezabel*, not to be at once and speedily, but in a lingring way, and by degrees, as Sicknes consumes a Body.

\* Rev. 2. 13.

\* For the Evidences of it I refer you to Dr. More's Exposition of the seven Churches, worthy every Learned and Understanding Mans reading, and of every sober Romanist.  
\* Coc. in loc.

2. This Perfection of God fits him to be a special Object of Trust. If he were forgetful, what comfort could we have in any Promise ? How could we depend upon him, if he were ignorant of our State ? His Compassions to pity us, his Readiness to relieve us, his Power to protect and assist us, would be insignificant, without his Omniscience to inform his Goodness, and direct the Arm of his Power. This Perfection is as it were Gods Office of Intelligence : As you go to your Memorandum Book to know what you are to do ; so doth God to his Omniscience : This Perfection is Gods Eye, to acquaint him with the necessities of his Church, and directs all his other Attributes in their exercise for and about his People. You may depend upon his Mercy that hath promised, and upon his Truth to perform, upon his Sufficiency to supply you, and his Goodness to relieve you, and his Righteousness to reward you, because he hath an infinite Understanding to know you and your wants, you and your services. And without this knowledge of his, no comfort could be drawn from any other Perfection ; none of them could be a sure Nail to hang our hopes and confidence upon. This is that, the Church alway Celebrated, *Psal. 105. 7. He hath remembred his Covenant for ever, and the Word which he hath commanded to a thousand generations ; And Verse 42. He remembred his holy Promise ; and he remembred for them his Covenant* \*. He remembers and understands his Covenant, therefore his Promise to perform it, and therefore our Wants to supply them.

\* Psal 106. 45.

3. And



3. And the rather, *because God knows the Persons of all his own.* He hath in his infinite Understanding, the exact number of all the individual Persons that belong to him; *2 Tim. 2. 19. The Lord knows them that are his.* He knows all things, because he hath Created them; and he knows his People because he hath not only made them, but also chose them: He could no more choose he knew not what, than he could Create he knew not what: He knows them under a *double Title*; of *Creation* as Creatures, in the common Mass of Creation; as new Creatures by a particular act of *Separation*. He cannot be ignorant of them in time, whom he fore-knew from Eternity: His knowledge in time is the same he had from Eternity: He fore-knew them that he intended to give the Grace of Faith unto; and he knows them after they believe, because he knows his own act, in bestowing Grace upon them, and his own Mark and Seal wherewith he hath stamp't them: No doubt but he that *calls the Stars of Heaven by their names* \*, knows the number of those living Stars that sparkle in the Firmament of his Church. He cannot be ignorant of their Persons, when he numbers the Hairs of their Heads, and hath Registered their Names in the Book of Life. As he only had an infinite Mercy to make the choice; so he only hath an infinite Understanding to comprehend their Persons. We only know the Elect of God by a Moral assurance in the Judgment of Charity, when the Conversation of Men is according to the Doctrine of God: We have not an infallible knowledge of them, we may be often mistaken; *Judas*, a Devil, may be judged by Man for a Saint, till he be stript of his disguise. God only hath an infallible knowledge of them, he knows his own Records, and the Counterparts in the hearts of his People; None can counterfeit his Seal, nor can any raze it out. \* When the Church is either scatter'd, like Dust by Persecution, or over-grown with Superstition and Idolatry, that there is scarce any grain of true Religion appearing, as in the time of *Elijah*, who complain'd that he was *left alone*, as if the Church had been rooted out of that corner of the World, \* yet God knew that he had a *number fed in a Cave*, and had reserved *seven thousand Men* that had preserved the purity of his Worship, and *not bow'd their knee to Baal*. *Christ knew his Sheep*, as well as he is known of them; yea, better than they can know him \*. *History* acquaints us, that *Cyrus* had so vast a memory, that he knew the name of every particular Souldier in his Army, which consisted of diverse Nations; Shall it be too hard for an infinite Understanding to know every one of that Host that march under his Banners? may he not as well know them, as know the number, qualities, influences of those Stars which lie conceal'd from our Eye, as well as those that are visible to our Sense? Yes, he knows them, as a General to employ them, as a Shepherd to preserve them: He knows them in the World to guard them, and he knows them when they are out of the World to gather them, and cull out their Bodies, though wrapped up in a Cloud of the putrified Carcasses of the Wicked: As he knew them from all Eternity to elect them, so he knows them in time to cloth their Persons with Righteousness, to protect their Persons in Calamity according to his good pleasure, and at last to raise and reward them according to his Promise.

\* Psal. 147. 4.

\* Turretin's  
Sermons, p.  
3. 2.\* 1 Kings 19.  
14, 18.

\* John 10. 34.

\* Psal. 1. 6.

4. We may take *Comfort* from hence, That *our sincerity cannot be unknown, to an infinite Understanding.* Not a way of the Righteous is conceal'd from him, and therefore *they shall stand in Judgment before him*; \* *The Lord knows the way of the Righteous*: He knows them to observe them, and he knows them to Reward them. How comfortable is it to appeal to this Attribute of God for our integrity, with *Hezekiah*, *2 Kings 20. 3. Remember Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart.* Christ himself is brought in in this *Prophetical Psalm* drawing out the Comfort of this Attribute, *Psal. 40. 9. I have not restrain'd my Lips Oh Lord thou knowest,* meaning his faithfulness in declaring the Righteousness of God. *Job* follows the



the same steps, *Also now, behold, my Record is in Heaven, and my Witness is on high* \* : My Innocence hath the Testimony of Men, but my greatest support is in the Records of God. *Also now* ; or besides the Testimony of my own Heart; I have another Witness in Heaven that knows the Heart, and can only judge of the principles of my actions, and clear me from the scorn of my Friends and the accusations of Men, with a justification of my Innocence: He repeats it twice to take the greater comfort in it. God knows that we do that in the simplicity of our Hearts, which may be judged by Men to be done for unworthy and sordid ends: He knows not only the outward action, but the inward affection; and praises that which Men often dispraise; and writes down that with an *Engel*, *Well done good and faithful Servant*, which Men daube with their severest Censures \*. How refreshing is it to consider, that God never mistake, the appearance for reality, nor is lead by the judgment of Man? He sits in Heaven and laughs at their follies and Censures. If God had no sounder and no more piercing a Judgment than Man, woe be to the sincerest Souls that are often judged Hypocrites by some. What a happiness is it for Integrity to have a Judge of infinite Understanding; who will one day wipe off the dirt of Worldly Reproaches?

\* Job 16. 19.

\* Rom. 2. 29.

Again, God knows the least dram of Grace and Righteousness in the Hearts of his People, though but as a *smoking Flax*, or the least bruise of a saving conviction\*; and knows it so as to cherish it; he knows that work he hath begun, and never hath his Eye off from it to abandon it.

\* Mat. 12. 20.

5. The consideration of this excellent Perfection in God may comfort us in our secret Prayers, sighs and works. If God were not of infinite Understanding, to pierce into the Heart, what comfort hath a poor Creature that hath a scantiness of Expressions, but a Heart in a flame? If God did not understand the Heart, Faith and Prayer which are internal works, would be in vain: How could he give that Mercy our Hearts plead for, if he were ignorant of our inward Affections? Hypocrites might scale Heaven by lofty Expressions, and a Sincere Soul come short of the happiness he is prepared for, for want of flourishing Gifts. Prayer is an internal work, words are but the Garment of Prayer; Meditation is the Body, and Affection the Soul and Life of Prayer; Give Ear to my words Oh Lord, consider my Meditation \*. Prayer is a Rational act, an act of the mind, not the act of a Parrot: Prayer is an act of the Heart, though the speaking Prayer is the work of the Tongue; Now God gives Ear to the words, but he considers the Meditation, the frame of the Heart. Consideration is a more exact notice than hearing, the act only of the Ear. Were not God of an infinite Understanding, and Omniscient, he might take fine Clothes, a heap of Garments for the Man himself; and be put off by glittering words, without a Spiritual Frame. What matter of rejoicing is it, that we call not upon a deaf and ignorant Idol; but on one that listens to our secret Petitions to give them a dispatch, that knows our desires afar off, and from the infiniteness of his Mercy, joyn'd with his Omniscience stands ready to give us a return? Hath he not a Book of Remembrance for them that fear him, and for their sighs and ejaculations to him as well as their discourses of him\*; and not only what Prayers they utter, but what gracious and holy thoughts they have of him? That thought upon his Name. Though millions of supplications be put up at the same time, yet they have all a distinct File (as I may say) in an infinite Understanding, which perceives and comprehends them all. As he observes millions of Sins committed at the same time by a vast number of Persons to Record them in order to Punishment; so he distinctly discerns an infinite number of Cries at the same moment to Register them in order to an Answer.

\* Psal. 5. 1.

\* Mal. 3. 16.

A sigh cannot scape an infinite Understanding, though crowded among a mighty multitude of Cries from others, or cover'd with many unwelcome distractions in our selves, no more than a believing touch from the Woman that

that



that had the Bloudy Issue, could be conceal'd from Christ, and be undiscern'd from the press of the thronging multitudes : Our groans are as audible and intelligible to him as our words, and he knows what is the mind of his own Spirit, though express'd in no plainer language than sobs and heavings \*. Thus David cheers up himself under the neglects of his Friends, *Psal. 38. 9. Lord my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.* Not a groan of a panting Spirit shall be lost, till God hath lost his knowledge ; Not a Petition forgotten while God hath a Record, nor a Tear dried while God hath a Bottle to reserve it in \*.

Our secret works are also known and observed by him ; not only our outward labour, but our inward love in it, *Heb. 6. 10.* If with Isaac we go privately into the Field to meditate, or secretly cast our Bread upon the Waters, he keeps his Eye upon us to Reward us, and returns the Fruit into our own Bosoms \* ; Yea, though it be but a Cup of cold Water, from an inward Spring of love given to a Disciple : *He sees your works and your labour, and faith and patience in working them \**, all the marks of your industry, and strength of your intentions, and Will, be as exact at last in order to a due Praise, as to open Sins in order to a just Recompence \*.

6. The Consideration of this excellent Attribute, affords Comfort in the Afflictions of good Men. He knows their Pressures, as well as hears their Cries \* : His Knowledge comes not by information from us ; but his Compassionate listening to our Cries springs from his own Inspection into our Sorrows ; He is affected with them, before we make any discovery of them : He is not ignorant of the best Season, when they may be usefully inflicted, and when they may be profitably removed : The Tribulation and Poverty of his Church is not unknown to him, *Rev. 2. 8, 9. I know thy Works and Tribulation, &c.* He knows their Works, and what Tribulation they meet with for him ; He sees their extremities, when they are toiling against the Wind and Tide of the World \* : Yea, the natural exigencies of the multitude are not neglected by him, he discerns to take care of them : Our Saviour considered the three days fasting of his Followers, and miraculously provides a Dish for them in the Wilderness. No good Man is ever out of Gods Mind, and therefore never out of his Compassionate Care : His Eye pierceth into their Dungeons and pities their Miseries. Joseph may forget his Brethren, and the Disciples not know Christ, when he walks upon the Midnight Waves and Turbulent Sea ; \* but a Lyons Den cannot obscure a Daniel from his Sight, nor the depths of the Whales Belly bury Jonah from the Divine Understanding : He discerns Peter in his Chains, and Stephen under the Stones of Martyrdom : He knows Lazarus under his tatter'd Rags, and Abel wallowing in his Blood : His Eye and Knowledge goes along with his People, when they are transplanted into Foreign Countreys, and sold for Slaves into the Islands of the Grecians, *for he will raise them out of the place, Joel 3. 6, 7.* He would defeat the hopes of the Persecutors, and applaud the Patience of his People : He knows his People in the Tabernacle of Life, and in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, *Psal. 23.* He knows all penal Evils because he commissions and directs them : He knows the Instruments because they are his Sword \*, and he knows his gracious Sufferer because he hath his Mark : He discerns Job in his Anguish, and the Devil in his Malice : By the direction of this Attribute he orders Calamities, and rescues from them. *Thou hast seen it, for thou holdest mischief and spite \** : That is the Comfort of the Psalmist, and the Comfort of every Believer, and the Ground of committing themselves to God under all the injustice of Men.

7. 'Tis a Comfort in all our Infirmities. As he knows our Sins to charge them ; so he knows the weakness of our Nature to pity us. As his infinite Understanding may scare us, because he knows our Transgressions ; so it may relieve



relieve us, because he knows our natural mutability in our first Creation : *He knows our frame, he remembers that we are dust* \* . 'Tis the reason of the precedent Verses, why he removes our Transgression from us, why he is so backward in Punishing ; so patient in waiting, so forward in pitying ; Why ? He doth not only remember our Sins, but remember our frame or forming, what brittle, though clear Glasses we were by Creation, how easie to be crackt : He remembers our impotent and weak Condition by Corruption ; what a sink we have of vain imaginations that remain in us alter Regeneration ; he doth not only consider that we were made according to his Image, and therefore able to stand, but that we were made of Dust and weak Matter, and had a sensitive Soul, like that of Beasts, as well as an intellectual Nature, like that of Angels, and therefore liable to follow the dictates of it, without exact care and watchfulness. If he remembered only the first, there would be no issue but Indignation ; but the Consideration of the latter moves his Compassion. How miserable should we be for want of this Perfection in the Divine Nature, whereby God remembers and reflects upon his past act in our first frame, and the mindfulness of our Condition excites the motion of his Bowels to us ? Had he lost the knowledge, how he first framed us ; did he not still remember the mutability of our Nature, as we were form'd and stamp't in his Mint ; How much more wretched would our Condition be than it is ? If his remembrance of our Original, be one ground of his Pity, the sense of his Omniscience should be a ground of our Comfort, in the stirring of our infirmities : He remembers we were but Dust, when he made us ; and yet remembers we are but Dust, while he preserves and forbears us.

8. 'Tis some Comfort *in the fears of some lurking Corruption in our Hearts*. We know by this whither to address our selves for the search and discovery of it : Perhaps some Blessings we want are retarded, some Calamities we understand not the particular cause of, are inflicted, some Petitions we have put up, hang too long for an Answer ; and the Chariot Wheels of Divine Goodness move slow and are long in coming : Let us beg the Aid of this Attribute to open to us the Remoras, to discover what base Affection there is that retards the Mercies we want, or attracts the Affliction we feel, or bars the Door against the return of our supplications. What our dim sight cannot discover, the clear Eye of God can make visible to us. *Job 10. 2. Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me*. As in want of Pardon, we particularly plead his Mercy, and in our desires for the performance of his Promise, we argue with him from his faithfulness ; so in the fear of any insincerity or hidden Corruption we should implore his Omniscience : For as God is a God in Covenant, our God, our God in the whole of his Nature ; so the Perfections of his Nature, are employed in their several Stations, as assistances of his Creatures. This was *David's* Practice and Comfort, after that large Meditation, on the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God, he turns his thoughts of it, into Petitions for the employment of it in the concerns of his Soul, and begs a Mercy suitable to the glory of this Perfection, *Psal. 139. 23. Search me Oh God and trie my heart, trie me and know my thoughts* ; Dive to the bottom, *Verse 24. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way Everlasting*. His desire is not barely that God should know him, for it would be senseless to beg of God that he should have Mercy or faithfulness, or power or knowledge in his Nature ; but he desires the exercise of this Attribute, in the discovery of himself to himself, in order to his sight of any wicked way, and Humiliation for it, and Reformation of it in order to his Conduct to Everlasting Life. As we may appeal to this Perfection to Judge us, when the sincerity of our Actions is Censured by others ; so we may implore it to search us, when our sincerity is question'd by our selves : That our Minds may be enlightned by a Beam from his Knowledge, and the little



Thieves may be pull'd out of their Dens in our Hearts by the hand of his Power. In particular, it is our Comfort that we can, and our necessity that we must Address particularly to this, when we engage solemnly in a work of self-examination; that we may have a clearer Eye to direct us than our own, that we may not mistake Brals for Gold, or counterfeit Graces for true; that nothing that is filthy and fit to be cast out, may escape our Sight, and preserve its Station. And we need not question the laying at the Door of this neglect, (*viz.* not calling in this Attribute to our Aid, whose proper Office it is, (as I may so say) to search and enquire) all the mistakes, ill success, and fruitlessness of our endeavours in self-examination, because we would engage in it, in the pitiful strength of our own dimness, and not in the light of Gods Countenance and the assistance of his Eye, which can discern what we cannot see, and discover that to us, which we cannot manifest to our selves. 'Tis a Comfort to a learner of an Art, to have a skilful Eye to overlook his work, and inform him of the defects. Beg the help of the Eye of God in all your searches and self-examinations.

9. The Consideration of this Attribute is Comfortable *in our assurances of, and reflections upon the pardon of Sin, or seeking of it.* As God punishes Men for Sin according to his knowledge of them, which is greater than the knowledge their own Consciences have of them; so he pardons according to his knowledge: He pardons not only according to our knowledge, but according to his own: He is greater than any Mans Heart, to condemn for that, which a Man is at present ignorant of; and greater than our Hearts, to pardon that which is not at present visible to us; He knows that which the most watchful Conscience cannot take a survey of: If God had not an infinite Understanding of us, how could we have a perfect and full pardon from him? It would not stand with his Honour to pardon he knew not what. He knows what Crimes we have to be pardon'd, when we know not all of them our selves, that stand in need of a gracious Remission; His Omniscience beholds every Sin to charge it upon our *Saviour*. If he knows our Sins that are black, he knows every mite of Christs Righteousness which is pure, and the utmost extent of his Merits, as well as the demerit of our iniquities. As he knows the fith of our Sin, he also knows the covering of our Saviour: He knows the value of the Redeemers Sufferings, and exactly understands every Plea in the intercession of our Advocate. Though God knows our Sins *oculo indice*, yet he doth not see them *oculo judice*, with a Judicial Eye: His Omniscience stirs not up his Justice to Revenge, but his Mercy to Pity. His infinite Understanding of what Christ hath done, directs him to disarm his Justice, and sound an Alarm to his Bowels. As he understands better than we what we have committed; so he understands better than we what our *Saviour* hath merited; and his Eye directs his Hand in the blotting out Guilt, and applying the Remedy.

3. The third Use shall be to Sinners to humble them, and put them upon serious Consideration. This Attribute speaks terrible things to a Profligate Sinner. *Basil* thinks that the ripping open the Sins of the Damned to their faces by this Perfection of God, is more terrible than their other Torments in Hell. God knows the Persons of Wicked Men, not one is exempted from his Eye, he sees all the actions of Men as well as he knows their Persons; *Job 11. 11. He knows vain Men, he sees wickedness also.* *Job 34. 21. His Eye is upon all their goings.* He hears the most private Whispers, *Psal. 139. 4.* the scope, manner, circumstance of speaking he knows it altogether: He *understands all our thoughts*, the first bubblings of that bitter Spring, *Psal. 139. 2.* The quickest glances of the Fancy, the closest musings of the Mind, and the abortive wouldings or wishes of the Will, the language of the Heart, as well as the language of the Tongue; Not a foolish thought, or an idle word, nor a wanton



wanton glance, or a dishonest action; Not a negligent service, or a distracting fancy, but is more visible to him, than the filth of a Dunghill can be to any Man by the help of a Sun Beam. How much better would it be for desperate Sinners, to have their Crimes known to all the Angels in Heaven, and Men upon Earth, and Devils in Hell, than that they should be known to their Sovereign, whose Laws they have violated, and to their Judge, whose Righteousness obligeth him to revenge the injury?

1. Consider, *What a poor Refuge is secrecy to a Sinner?* Not the Myths of a foggy Day, nor the obscurity of the darkest Night, nor the closest Curtains, nor the deepest Dungeon, can hide any Sin from the Eye of God. *Adam* is known in his Thickets, and *Jonah* in his Cabin. *Achan's* Wedge of Gold is discern'd by him, though buried in the Earth, and hooded with a Tent. Shall *Sarah* be unseen by him, when she mockingly laughs behind the Door? Shall *Gehazy* tell a Lye, and comfort himself with an imagination of his Masters ignorance, as long as God knows it? Whatsoever works Men do, are not hid from God, whither done in the darkness or Day-light, in the Midnight darkness, or the Noon-day Sun: He is all Eye to see, and he hath a great Wrath to Punish. The Wheels in *Ezekiel* are full of Eyes: A piercing Eye to behold the Sinner, and a swift Wheel of Wrath to overtake him. God is Light, and of all things Light is most difficultly kept out. The secretest Sins are set in the light of his Countenance\*, as legible to him, as if writ with a Sun Beam; More visible to him than the greatest Print to the sharpest Eye. The Fornications of the *Samaritan Woman*, perhaps known only to her own Conscience, were manifest to Christ\*. There is nothing so secretly done, but there is an infallible Witness to prepare a Charge. Though God be invisible to us, we must not imagine we are so to him; 'tis a vanity therefore to think, we can conceal our selves from God, by concealing the Notions of God from our sense and practice. If Men be as close from the Eyes of all Men, as from those of the Sun; yea, if they could separate themselves from their own Shadow, they could not draw themselves from Gods Understanding: How then can darkness shelter us, or Crafty Artifices defend us? With what shame will Sinners be filled, when God, who hath trac'd their Steps, and writ their Sins in a Book, shall make a Repetition of their Ways, and unvail the Web of their Wickedness?

\* Psal. 90. 8.

\* John 4. 16.

2. What a dreadful Consideration is this to the juggling Hypocrite, that masks himself with an appearance of Piety? An infinite Understanding judges not according to Vails and Shadows, but according to Truth; He judges not according to appearance\*. The outward Comeliness of a work imposeth not on him, his Knowledg, and therefore his Estimations are quite of another Nature than those of Men. By this Perfection God looks through the Vail, and beholds the litter of Abominations in the secrets of the Soul; the true Quality and Principle of every Work, and judges of them as they are, and not as they appear. Disguised Pretexts cannot deceive him; the Disguises are known afar off before they are weav'd, he pierceth into the depths of the most abstruse Wills; all secret Ends are dissected before him: Every action is naked in its outside, and open in its inside, all are as clear to him as if their Bodies were of Chrystal, so that if there be any secret reserves, he will certainly reprove us\*. We are often deceiv'd, we may take Wolves for Sheep, and Hypocrites for Believers; for the Eyes of Men are no better than Flesh, and dive no further than appearance; but an infinite Understanding, that fathoms the secret depths of the Heart, is too knowing to let a Dream pass for a Truth, or mistake a Shadow for a Body. Though we call God Father all our days, speak the language of Angels, or be endowed with the Gifts of Miracles, he can discern whether we have his Mark upon us; He can espy the Treason of *Judas* in a Kiss; *Herod's* intent of Murdering under a specious pretence

\* Sam. 16. 7.

\* Job 13. 10.



pretence of Worship: A *Pharisees* fraud under a broad *Phylactery*; A Ravenous Wolf under the softness of a Sheeps Skin; And the Devil in *Samuels* Mantle, or when he would shrowd himself among the *Sons of God* \*. All the Rooms of the Heart, and every atome of Dust in the least chink of it, is clear to his Eye: He can strip Sin from the fairest Excuses, pierce into the Heart with more ease than the Sun can through the thinnest Cloud or Vapour; and look through all *Ephraims* ingenuous Inventions to excuse his *Idolatry* \*. Hypocrisie then is a senseless thing, since it cannot escape unmasking, by an infinite Understanding. As all our force cannot stop his Arm, when he is resolved to Punish; so all our sophistry cannot blind his Understanding, when he comes to Judge. Woe to the Hypocrite, for God sees him; all his juggling is open and naked to infinite Understanding.

3. Is it not also a senseless thing to be careless of Sins committed long ago? The old Sins forgotten by Men, stick fast in an infinite Understanding: Time cannot raze out that which hath been known from Eternity. Why should they be forgotten many years after they were acted, since they were fore-known in an Eternity before they were committed, or the Criminal capable to practice them? *Amalek* must pay their Arrears of their ancient Unkindness to *Israel* in the time of *Saul*, though the Generation that committed them were rotten in their Graves \*. Old Sins are written in a Book, which lies always before God; and not only our own Sins, but the Sins of our Fathers, to be requited upon their Posterity \*. What a vanity is it then to be regardless of the Sins of an Age that went before us; because they are in some measure out of our knowledge, are they therefore blotted out of Gods remembrance? Sins are bound up with him, as Men do Bonds, till they resolve to sue for the Debt; *The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up* \*. As his fore-knowledge extends to all acts that shall be done, so his remembrance extends to all acts that have been done. We may as well say, God fore-knows nothing that shall be done to the end of the World, as that he forgets any thing that hath been done from the beginning of the World. The former Ages of the World are no further distant from him than the latter. God hath a Calendar, (as it were) or an Account Book of Mens Sins ever since the beginning of the World, what they did in their Childhood, what in their Youth, what in their Manhood, and what in their Old Age: He hath them in store among his Treasures \*: He hath neither lost his Understanding to know them, nor his Resolution to revenge them: As it follows, *To me Vengeance belongs*. He intends to enrich his Justice with a glorious manifestation, by rendring a due Recompence. And it is to be observed, that God doth not only necessarily remember them; but sometimes binds himself by an Oath to do it; *Amos 8. 7. The Lord hath sworn by the Excellency of Jacob, surely I will never forget any of their works*. Or in the Hebrew, *If I ever forget any of their works*; That is, Let me not be accounted a God for ever, if I do forget; Let me lose my Godhead, if I lose my remembrance. 'Tis not less a Misery to the Wicked, than it is a Comfort to the Godly, that their Record is in Heaven.

4. Let it be observed, *That this infinite Understanding, doth exactly know the sins of Men, he knows so as to consider*. He doth not only know them, but intently behold them; *\* His Eye-lids trie the Children of Men*, a Metaphor taken from Men, that contract the Eye-lids, when they would wistly and accurately behold a thing; 'tis not a transient and careless look, *Psal. 10. 14. Thou hast seen it*; Thou hast intently beheld it, as the word properly signifies: He beholds and knows the actions of every particular Man, as if there were none but he in the World: And doth not only know, but ponder \*, and consider their works \*, He is not a bare Spectator, but a diligent Observer, *\* By him actions are weighed*; To see what degree of good or evil there is in them, what there is to blemish them, what to advantage them,



them, what the quality and quantity of every action is. Consideration takes in every Circumstance of the Considered Object: Notice is taken of the place where, the minute when, the Mercy against which it is committed; the number of them is exact in Gods Book; *They have tempted me now these ten times* \*, against the demonstrations of my Glory in Egypt and the Wilderness. The whole Guilt in every Circumstance is spread before him: His knowledge of Mens Sins is not confused, such an Imperfection an infinite Understanding cannot be subject to: 'Tis exact, for *iniquity is markt before him* \*.

\* Numb. 14.  
22.

\* Jer. 1. 23.

5. *God knows Mens miscarriage so as to judge.* This use his Omniscience is put to, to maintain his Sovereign Authority in the exercise of his Justice: His notice of the Sins of Men is in order to a just Retribution, *Psal. 10. 14. Thou hast seen mischief to requite it with thy hand.* The Eye of his Knowledge directs the Hand of his Justice; and no sinful action that falls under his Cognizance, but will fall under his Revenge; they can as little escape his Censure as they can his Knowledge: He is a Witness in his Omniscience, that he may be a Judge in his Righteousness: He *knows the hearts of the Wicked*, so as to hate their Works, and testify his abhorrency of that which is of *high value with M<sup>n</sup>* \*. Sin is not preserved in his Understanding, or written down in his Book to be moth-eaten as an old Manuscript, but to be open'd one day, and Copied out in the Consciences of Men: He writes them to publish them, and sets them in the light of his Countenance, to bring them to the light of their Consciences. What a terrible consideration is it, to think that the Sins of a day are upon Record in an Infallible Understanding, much more the Sins of a week; What a number then do the Sins of a Month, a Year, ten or forty Years arise to? How many actions against Charity, against Sincerity; what an infinite number is there of them, all bound up in the Court Rolls of Gods Omniscience, in order to a Tryal, to be brought out before the Eyes of Men? Who can seriously consider all those Bonds, reserv'd in the Cabinet of Gods Knowledge to be sued out against the Sinner in due time, without an unexpressible horror?

\* Luke 16. 15.

4. The fourth Use is of *Exhortation*. *Let us have a sense of Gods Knowledge upon our hearts.* All Wickedness hath a spring from a want of due Consideration and sense of it. *David* concludes it so, \* *The proud rose against him, and violent Men sought after his Soul*, because they did not set God before them. They think God doth not know, and therefore care not what, nor how they act. When the fear of this Attribute is remov'd, a Door is open'd to all Impiety: What is there so villanous, but the minds of Men will attempt to act? What Reverence of a Deity can be left, when the sense of his infinite Understanding is extinguish'd? What Faith could there be in Judgments in Witnesses? How would the Foundations of Humane Society be overturn'd? The Pillars upon which Commerce stands, be utterly broken and dissolved? What Society can be preserved, if this be not truly believed and faithfully stuck to? But how easily would Oaths be swallowed and quickly violated, if the sense of this Perfection were rooted out of the minds of Men? What fear could they have of calling to Witness a Being they imagine blind and ignorant? Men secretly imagine, that *God knows not*, or *soon forgets*, and then make bold to Sin against him \*. How much does it therefore concern us to cherish and keep alive the sense of this? If *God writes us upon the Palms of his Hands*, as the Expression is, to remember us, let us engrave him upon the Tables of our Hearts to remember him. It would be a good Motto to write upon our Minds, *God knows all*, he is of infinite Understanding.

\* Psal. 85. 14.

\* Ezek. 8. 12.

1. *This would give check to much iniquity.* Can a Mans Conscience easily and delightfully swallow that, which he is sensible falls under the Cognizance of God, when it is hateful to the Eye of his Holiness, and renders the Actor odious to him? *Doth he not see my ways, and count all my steps*, saith *Job* \*. To what end doth he fix this Consideration? To keep him from wanton glances, Temptations have no encouragement to come near him, that is constantly arm'd

\* Job 31. 4.



arm'd with the thoughts that his Sin is Book't in Gods Omniscience. If any impudent Devil hath the face to tempt us, we should not have the impudence to joyn issue with him under the sense of an infinite Understanding. How fruitless would his Wiles be against this Consideration? How easily would his Snares be crackt, by one sensible thought of this? This doth *Solomon* prescribe to allay the heat of *Carnal imaginations*\*. It were a useful Question to ask, at the appearance of every Temptation, at the entrance upon every Action, as the Church did in Temptations to Idolatry; \* *Shall not God search this out, for he knows the secrets of the heart?* His Understanding comprehends us more than our Consciences can our acts, or our understanding our thoughts: Who durst speak Treason against a Prince, if he were sure he heard him, or that it would come to his knowledge? A sense of Gods knowledge of Wickedness in the first motion, and inward contrivance would bar the accomplishment and execution. The Consideration of Gods infinite Understanding, would cry stand to the first glances of the heart to Sin.

2. *It would make us watchful over our hearts and thoughts.* Should we harbour any unworthy thoughts in our Cabinet, if our heads and hearts were possess'd with this useful truth, That *God knows every thing which comes into our minds*\*? We should as much blush at the rising of impure thoughts before the Understanding of God, as at the discovery of unworthy actions to the knowledge of Men; If we lived under a sense, that not a thought of all those millions, which flutter about our Minds, can be conceal'd from him; how watchful and careful should we be of our hearts and thoughts?

3. *It would be a good preparation to every Duty.* This Consideration should be the Preface to every service; The Divine Understanding knows how I now act. This would engage us to serious Intention, and quell wandring and distracting fancies: Who would come before God, with a careless and ignorant Soul, under a sense of his infinite Understanding, and Prerogative of searching the heart? *Oh thou that sittest in Heaven*, was a Consideration the *Psalmist* had at the beginning of his Prayer\*: Whereby he testifies not only an apprehension of the Majesty and Power of God, but of his Omniscience; as one sitting above, beholds all that is below; Would we offer to God such raw and undigested Petitions; would there be so much flatness in our services; should our hearts so often give us the slip: Would any hang down their Heads like a Bulrush, by an affected or counterfeit Humility, while the Heart is filled with Pride, if we did actuate Faith in this Attribute? No, our Prayers would be more sound, our Devotions more vigorous, our Hearts more close, our Spirits like the Chariots of *Aminadab*, more swift in their motions: Every thing would be done by us with all our might, which would be very feeble and faint, if we conceived God to be of a Finite Understanding like our selves. Let us therefore before every Duty, not draw, but open the Curtains between God and our Souls, and think that we are going before him that *sees us*, before him that *knows us*\*. And the stronger Impressions of the Divine Knowledge are upon our Minds, the better would our preparation be for, and the more active our frames in every service: And certainly we may judge of the suitableness of our preparations, by the strength of such Impressions upon us.

4. *This would tend to make us sincere in our whole Course.* This prescription *David* gave to *Solomon*, to maintain a soundness and health of Spirit in his walk before God; *1 Chron. 28. 9. And thou Solomon my Son, know the God of thy Fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart, for the Lord understands all the imaginations of the thoughts.* *Josephus* gives this reason for *Abels* Holiness, That he believed God was ignorant of nothing. As the Doctrine of Omniscience is the foundation of all Religion; so the Impression of it, would promote the practice of all Religion. When all our ways are imagin'd by us to be before the Lord, we shall then keep his Precepts\*. And we can never be perfect or sincere, till we walk before God, *Gen. 17. 1.* as under the Eye of Gods Knowledge. What we speak, what we think, what we act is in his sight: He knows every

\* Prov. 5. 10, 11.

\* Psal. 44. 21.

\* Ezck. 11. 5.

\* Psal. 123. 1.

\* Gen. 16. 13.

\* Antiquit. lib. 1. cap. 3.

\* Psal. 119. 168.



every place where we are, every thing that we do, as well as Christ knew *Nathaniel* under the Fig-tree. As he is too Powerful to be vanquish'd, so he is too Understanding to be deceived: The sense of this would make us walk with as much care, as if the understanding of all Men did comprehend us and our actions.

5. The Consideration of this Attribute *would make us humble*. How dejected would a Person be, if he were sure all the Angels in Heaven and Men upon Earth, did perfectly know his Crimes, with all their aggravations? But what is Created Knowledge to an infinite and just Censuring Understanding? When we consider that he knows our actions, whereof there are multitudes, and our thoughts whereof there are millions: That he views all the Blessings bestow'd upon us; all the injuries we have return'd to him; That he exactly knows his own Bounty, and our ingratitude; all the Idolatry, Blasphemy, and secret enmity in every Mans heart against him; all Tyrannical Oppressions, hidden Lusts, omissions of necessary Duties, violations of plain Precepts, every foolish Imagination, with all the Circumstances of them; and that perfectly in their full Anatomy, every mite of unworthiness and wickedness in every Circumstance; and add to this his Knowledge, the wonders of his Patience, which are miraculous upon the score of his Omniscience, that he is not as quick in his Revenge, as he is in his Understanding; but is so far from inflicting Punishment, that he continues his former Benefits, arms not his Justice against us, but solicites our Repentance, and waits to be Gracious with all this knowledge of our Crimes; should not the Consideration of this, melt our hearts into Humiliation before him, and make us earnest in begging pardon and forgiveness of him?

Again, Do we not all find a Worm in our best Fruit, a Flaw in our soundest Duties? Shall any of us vaunt, as if God beheld only the Gold, and not any Dross; as if he knew one thing only, and not another? If we knew something by our selves to cheer us, do we not also know something, yea, many things to condemn us, and therefore to humble us? Let the sense of Gods infinite Knowledge therefore be an Incentive and Argument for more Humiliation in us. If we know enough to render our selves vile in our own Eyes, how much more doth God know to render us vile in his!

6. The Consideration of this Excellent Perfection, should *make us to acquiesce in God, and rely upon him in every strait*. In publick, in private: He knows all Cases, and he knows all Remedies; He knows the Seasons of bringing them, and he knows the Seasons of removing them, for his own Glory. What is *contingent* in respect of us, and of our fore-knowledge, and in respect of *second* causes, is it not so in regard of Gods, who hath the knowledge of the futurity of all things: He knows all Causes in themselves, and therefore knows what every Cause will produce, what will be the event of every Counsel and of every Action? How should we commit our selves to this God of infinite Understanding, who knows all things, and fore-knows every thing, that cannot be forced through ignorance to take new Counsel, or be surpriz'd with any thing, that can happen to us? This use the *Psalmist* makes of it, *Psal. 10. 14. Thou hast seen it, the poor committeth himself unto thee*. Though some trust in Chariots and Horses\*, some in Counsels and Counsellors, some in their Arms and Courage, and some in meer vanity and nothing, yet let us remember the Name and Nature of the Lord our God, his Divine Perfections, of which this of his infinite Understanding and Omniscience is none of the least, but so necessary, that without it he could not be God, and the whole World would be a mere Chaos and Confusion.

\* *Psal. 10. 7.*







A  
DISCOURSE  
UPON THE  
Wisdom of God.

Rom. XVI. 27.

*To God only Wise be glory through Jesus Christ, for ever,  
Amen.*

**T**His Chapter being the last of this *Epistle*, is chiefly made up of charitable and friendly Salutations and Commendations of particular Persons, according to the earliness and strength of their several Graces, and their labour of Love for the Interest of God and his People.

In *verse 17.* he warns them not to be drawn aside from the *Gospel Doctrine*, which had been taught them, by the plausible Pretences and Insinuations, which the Corrupters of the Doctrine and Rule of *Christ*, never want from the suggestions of their *Carnal Wisdom*. The Brats of Soul-destroying Errors, may walk about the World in a garb and disguise of *good words, and fair speeches*, as it is in the *18th Verse*, by *good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*. And for their encouragement to a constancy in the Gospel Doctrine, he assures them, that all those that would dispossess them of Truth, to possess them with Vanity, are but *Satan's Instruments*, and will fall under the same Captivity and Yoke with their Principal; *Verse 18. The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*

Whence observe,

1. *All Corrupters of Divine Truth, and Troublers of the Churches Peace, are no better than Devils.* Our Saviour thought the Name *Satan*, a Title merited by *Peter*, when he breathed out an Advice, as an Ax at the Root of the Gospel, the *Death of Christ*, the foundation of all Gospel Truth; and the *Apostle* concludes them under the same Character, which hinder the superstructure, and would mix their Chaff with his Wheat; *Mat. 16. 23. Get thee behind me Satan.* 'Tis not, *Get thee behind me Simon*, or, *Get thee behind me Peter*; but, *Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence to me*: Thou dost oppose thy self to the Wisdom, and Grace, and Authority of God, to the Redemption of Man, and to the good of the World.

As the *Holy Ghost* is the Spirit of Truth, so is *Satan* the Spirit of Falshood: As the *Holy Ghost* inspires Believers with Truth, so doth the *Devil* corrupt Unbelievers with Error. Let us cleave to the Truth of the Gospel, that we may not be counted by God as part of the Corporation of Fallen Angels, and not be barely reckon'd as Enemies of God, but in league with the greatest Enemy to his Glory in the World.

2. *The Reconciler of the World will be the subduer of Satan.* The God of Peace sent the *Prince of Peace* to be the Restorer of his Rights, and the Hammer to beat in pieces the Usurper of them. As a God of Truth he will make good his Promise, as a God of Peace he will perfect the design, his Wisdom hath laid, and begun to act. In the subduing *Satan*, he will be the Conqueror of his Instruments: He saith not, *God shall bruise your Troublers, and Hereticks*; but *Satan*: The fall of a General proves the rout of the Army. Since God, as a *God of Peace* hath delivered his own, he will perfect the Victory, and make them cease from bruising the heel of his Spiritual Seed.

X x †

3. Divine



3. *Divine Evangelical Truth shall be Victorious.* No Weapon formed against it shall prosper: The Head of the Wicked shall fall as low, as the Feet of the Godly. The Devil never yet bluster'd in the World, but he met at last with a disappointment: His Fall hath been like *Lightning*, sudden, certain, vanishing.

4. *Faith must look back as far as the foundation Promise.* The God of Peace shall bruise, &c. The Apostle seems to allude to the first Promise, Gen. 2. 15. A Promise that hath vigor to nourish the Church in all Ages of the World: 'Tis the standing Cordial; out of the Womb of this Promise all the rest have taken their birth. The Promises of the Old Testament were designed for those under the New, and the full performance of them, is to be expected, and will be enjoyed by them. 'Tis a mighty strengthening to Faith, to trace the footsteps of Gods Truth and Wisdom, from the Threatning against the Serpent in *Eden*, to the bruise he received in *Calvary*, and the Triumph over him upon Mount *Olivet*:

5. *We are to confide in the Promise of God, but leave the season of its accomplishment to his Wisdom.* He will bruise Satan under your feet, therefore do not doubt it; and shortly, therefore wait for it: Shortly it will be done, that is, quickly, when you think it may be a great way off; or shortly, that is, seasonably, when Satans Rage is hottest. God is the best Judge of the seasons of distributing his own Mercies, and darting out his own Glory: 'Tis enough to encourage our waiting, that it will be, and that it will be shortly; but we must not measure God's *shortly* by our Minutes.

The Apostle after this concludes with a comfortable Prayer, That since they were liable to many Temptations, to turn their backs upon the Doctrine which they had learned; yet he desires God, who had brought them to the knowledge of his Truth, would confirm them in the belief of it, since it was the Gospel of Christ, his dear Son, and a Mystery he had been chary of and kept in his own Cabinet, and now brought forth to the World in pursuance of the ancient Prophecies, and now had publish'd to all Nations for that end that it might be obeyed; and concludes with a *Doxology*, a voice of Praise, to him who was only Wise to effect his own purposes; Verses 25, 26, 27. Now to him that is of power to establish you, according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the Mystery, which was kept secret since the World began; but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the Everlasting God, made known to all Nations for the obedience of Faith. This *Doxology* is interlac'd with many Comforts for the Romans. He explains the causes of this glory to God, Power and Wisdom; Power to establish the Romans in Grace, which includes his Will. This he proves from a Divine Testimony, viz. the Gospel; the Gospel committed to him, and preached by him, which he commends by calling it the *preaching of Christ*; and describes it, for the instruction and comfort of the Church from the Adjuncts, the obscurity of it under the old Testament, and the clearness of it under the New: It was hid from the former Ages, and kept in silence; not simply and absolutely, but comparatively and in part; because in the Old Testament, the Doctrine of Salvation by Christ was confin'd to the limits of *Judea*, preached only to the Inhabitants of that Country: To them he gave his Statutes and his Judgments, and dealt not so magnificently with any Nation †; but now he causes it to spring with greater Majesty out of those narrow bounds, and spread its Wings about the World. This manifestation of the Gospel he declares first from the subject, All Nations: 2. From the principal efficient cause of it, The Commandment and Order of God: 3. The Instrumental cause, The Prophetick Scriptures: 4. From the End of it, The obedience of Faith.

1. Observe, The glorious Attributes of God bear a comfortable respect to Believers. Power and Wisdom are here mention'd as two props of their Faith; his Power here includes his Goodness. Power to help, without Will to assist, is a dry Chip. The Apostle mentions not Gods Power simply and absolutely considered, for that of it self is no more comfort to Men, than it is to Devils; but as considered in the Gospel Covenant, his Power, as well as his other Perfections, are ingredients in that Cordial of Gods being our God. We should never think of the Excellency of the Divine Nature, without considering the Duties they demand, and gathering the Hony they present.

2. Obf.

† Psa. 147.  
19, 20.

Gomarus in  
loc.



2. *Obj. The stability of a gracious Soul depends upon the Wisdom, as well as the Power of God.* It would be a disrepute to the Almightyness of God, if that should be totally vanquish'd which was introduc'd by his Mighty Arm, and rooted in the Soul by an irresistible Grace. It would speak a want of Strength to maintain it, or a change of Resolution, and so would be no Honour to the Wisdom of his first design. 'Tis no part of the wisdom of an Artificer, to let a work wherein he determin'd to shew the greatness of his Skill, to be dash'd in pieces, when he hath a power to preserve it. God design'd every gracious Soul for a piece of *his workmanship* \* : What, to have \* Eph. 2.10 the Skill of his Grace defeated? If any Soul which he hath graciously conquer'd should be wrested from him, what could be thought, but that his Power is enfeebled? If deserted by him, what could be imagin'd, but that he repented of his labour, and alter'd his Counsel, as if rashly undertaken? These *Romans* were rugged Pieces, and lay in a filthy quarry, when God came first to smooth them; for so the *Apostle* represents them with the rest of the Heathen, *Rom. 1. 19.* and would he throw them away, or leave them to the power of his Enemy, after all his pains he had taken with them, to fit them for his Building? Did he not foresee the designs of Satan against them; what stratagems he would use to defeat his Purposes, & strip him of the honour of his work; and would God so gratifie his Enemy, and disgrace his own *Wisdom*? The deserting of what hath been acted is a real Repentance, and argues an Imprudence in the first resolve and attempt. The Gospel is called, the *Manifestation of God*, Eph. 3. 10. the fruit of it in the heart of any Person, which is a main design of it, hath a Title to the same Character; and shall this Grace, which is the product of this Gospel, and therefore the birth of *Manifested Wisdom*, be suppress'd? 'Tis at Gods hand we must seek our fixedness and establishment, and act Faith upon these two Attributes of God. *Power* is no ground to expect stability, without *Wisdom* intersting the Agent in it, and finding out and applying the Means for it. *Wisdom* is naked without *Power* to act, and *Power* is useless without *Wisdom* to direct: They are these two Excellencies of the Deity, the *Apostle* here pitches the Hope and Faith of the Converted *Romans* upon for their stability.

3. *Obj. The perseverance of Believers in Grace, is a Gospel Doctrine. According to my Gospel:* My Gospel Ministerially, according to that Gospel Doctrine I have taught you in this *Epistle*; (for, as the *Prophets* were Comments upon the *Law*, so are the *Epistles* upon the Gospel:) This very Doctrine he had discours'd of *Rom. 8. 38, 39.* where he tells them, that neither death nor life, the Terrors of a cruel death, or the Allurements of an honourable and pleasant life, nor *Principalities* and *Powers*, with all their subtilty and strength; nor the things we have before us, nor the Promises of a future felicity, by either Angels in Heaven, or Devils in Hell; nor the highest Angel, nor the deepest Devil, is able to separate us, us *Romans*, from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. So that, According to my Gospel, may be according to that Declaration of the Gospel, which I have made in this *Epistle*, which doth not only promise the first creating Grace, but the perfecting and crowning Grace; for not only the being of Grace, but the health, liveliness, and perpetuity of Grace is the fruit of the *New Covenant*, Jer. 32. 40.

4. Observe, That the Gospel is the sole Means of a Christians Establishment. According To my Gospel, that is, By my Gospel. The Gospel is the Instrumental cause of our Spiritual life, 'tis the cause also of the Continuance of it; 'tis the Seed whereby we were born, and the Milk whereby we are nourish'd; 'tis the Power of God to [salvation], and therefore to all the degrees of it. John 17. 17. Sanctifie them by thy Truth, or through thy Truth; by or through his Truth he sanctifies us, and by the same Truth he establisheth us: The first Sanctification, and the progress of it, the first lineaments and the last colours, are wrought by the Gospel. The Gospel therefore ought to be known, studied, and considered by us: 'Tis the Charter of our Inheritance, and the security for our standing. The Law acquaints us with our Duty, but contributes nothing to our strength and settlement.

5. Observe, The Gospel is nothing else but the Revelation of Christ. Verse 25. According to my Gospel, in the preaching of Jesus Christ: The discovery of the Mystery of Redemption and Salvation, in and by him. 'Tis *Genitivus obiecti*, that Preaching wherein Christ is declared and set out, with the Benefits accruing by him. This is the priviledge the *Wisdom* of God reserved for the latter Times, which the *Old Testament Church* had only under a Veil.



6. 'Tis a part of the Excellency of the Gospel, that it had the Son of God for its Publisher: The Preaching of Jesus Christ. It was first preached to Adam in Paradise by God, and afterwards publish'd by Christ in Person to the Inhabitants of Judea. It was not the Invention of Man, but Copied from the bosom of the Father by him that lay in his Bosom. The Gospel we have, is the same which our Saviour himself preached when he was in the World: He preached it not to the Romans; but the same Gospel he preached is transmitted to the Romans. It therefore Commands our respect; who ever slight it, 'tis as much as if he slighted Jesus Christ himself, were he in Person to sound it from his own Lips. The validity of a Proclamation is derived from the Authority of the Prince that dictates it and orders it; yet the greater the Person that publisheth it, the more dishonour is cast upon the Authority of the Prince that enjoins it, if it be contain'd. The Everlasting God ordain'd it, and the Eternal Son publish'd it.

7. The Gospel was of an Eternal Resolution, though of a temporary Revelation. Verse 25. According to the Revelation of the Mystery, which was kept secret since the World began. 'Tis an Everlasting Gospel. It was a Promise before the world began, Tit. 1.2. It was not a new Invention, but only kept secret among the Arcana, in the Breast of the Almighty. It was hidden from Angels, for the depths of it are not yet fully made known to them; their desire to look into it, speaks yet a deficiency in their Knowledge of it\*. It was publish'd in Paradise, but in such words as Adam did not fully understand: It was both discover'd and clouded in the Smoke of Sacrifices: It was wrapped up in a Vail under the Law, but not open'd till the Death of the Redeemer: It was then plainly said to the Cities of Judah, Behold your God comes. The whole Transaction of it between the Father and the Son, which is the Spirit of the Gospel, was from Eternity; the Creation of the World was in order to the manifestation of it. Let us not then regard the Gospel as a Novelty; the consideration of it, as one of Gods Cabinet Rarities, should enhance our Estimation of it. No Traditions of Men, no Inventions of vain Wits, that pretend to be wiser than God, should have the same Credit with that which bears date from Eternity.

\* 1 Pet. 1. 12.

8. Observe, That Divine Truth is Mysterious. According to the revelation of the mystery, Christ manifested in the flesh. The whole Scheme of Godliness is a Mystery. No Man or Angel could imagine, how two Natures so distant as the Divine and Human, should be united; how the same Person should be Criminal and Righteous; how a Just God should have a Satisfaction, and Sinful Man a Justification; how the Sin should be punish'd, and the Sinner saved. None could imagine such a way of Justification, as the Apostle in this Epistle declares: It was a Mystery, when hid under the Shadows of the Law; and a Mystery to the Prophets, when it sounded from their Mouths; they searched it, without being able to comprehend it†.

† 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11.

If it be a Mystery, 'tis humbly to be submitted to: Mysteries surmount Human Reason. The study of the Gospel must not be with a yawning and careless frame. Trades you call Mysteries, are not learned sleeping and nodding; Diligence is required, we must be Disciples at Gods Feet. As it had God for the Author, so we must have God for the Teacher of it; the Contrivance was his, and the Illumination of our Minds must be from him. As God only manifested the Gospel, so he only can open our Eyes to see the Mysteries of Christ in it.

In Verse 26. we may observe,

1. The Scriptures of the Old Testament verifie the substance of the New, and the New doth evidence the Authority of the Old. By the Scriptures of the Prophets made known. The Old Testament credits the New, and the New illustrates the Old. The New Testament is a Comment upon the Prophetick part of the Old. The Old shews the Promises and Predictions of God, and the New shews the Performance: What was foretold in the Old, is fulfilled in the New; the Predictions are cleared by the Events. The Predictions of the Old are Divine, because they are above the Reason of Man to foreknow: None but an Infinite Knowledge could foretell them, because none but an Infinite Wisdom could order all things for the accomplishment of them.

The



The Christian Religion hath then the surest Foundation, since the Scriptures of the *Prophets*, wherein it is foretold, are of undoubted Antiquity, and owned by the *Jews* and many *Heathens*, which are and were the great Enemies of Christ. The *Old Testament* is therefore to be read for the strengthening of our Faith. Our Blessed *Saviour* himself draws the Streams of his Doctrine from the *Old Testament*: He clears up the Promise of *Eternal Life*, and the Doctrine of the *Resurrection*, from the words of the Covenant, *I am the God of Abraham, &c.* Mar. 22. 32. And our *Apostle* clears up the Doctrine of *Justification by Faith* from Gods Covenant with *Abraham*, Rom. 4. It must be read, and it must be read as it is writ: It was writ to a Gospel End, it must be studied with a Gospel Spirit. The *Old Testament* was writ to give Credit to the *New*, when it should be manifested in the World. It must be read by us, to give strength to our Faith, and establish us in the Doctrine of *Christianity*. How many view it as a bare story, an *Almanack* out of date, and regard it as a dry Bone, without sucking from it the *Evangelical Marrow*? Christ is, in *Genesis*, *Abrahams Seed*; in *David's Psalms* and the *Prophets*, the *Messiah* and Redeemer of the World.

2. Observe the *Antiquity of the Gospel*. Is made manifest by the Scriptures of the *Prophets*. It was of as Ancient a date as any Prophecy: The first Prophecy was nothing else but a Gospel Charter; it was not made at the Incarnation of Christ, but made manifest. It then rose up to its Meridian lustre, and sprung out of the Clouds, wherewith it was before obscur'd. The Gospel was preached to the Ancients by the *Prophets*, as well as to the *Gentiles* by the *Apostles*; Heb. 4. 2. *Unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them.* To them first, to us alter; to them indeed more cloudy, to us more clear; but they as well as we, were *Evangeliz'd*, as the word signifies.

The Covenant of *Grace* was the same in the Writings of the *Prophets*, and the Declarations of the *Evangelists* and *Apostles*. Though by our *Saviours* Incarnation, the Gospel Light was clearer, and by his Ascension, the Effusions of the Spirit fuller and stronger; yet the Believers under the *Old Testament*, saw Christ in the Swadling Bands of Legal Ceremonies, and the Lattice of *Prophetical Writings*; they could not else offer one Sacrifice, or read one Prophecy with a Faith of the right stamp. *Abrahams* Justifying Faith had Christ for its Object, though it was not so Explicit as ours, because the Manifestation was not so clear as ours.

3. All Truth is to be drawn from Scripture. The *Apostle* refers them here to the Gospel and the *Prophets*: The Scripture is the Source of Divine Knowledge; not the Traditions of Men, nor Reason separate from Scripture. Whosoever brings another Doctrine, coyns another Christ; nothing is to be added to what is written, nothing detracted from it. He doth not send us for Truth, to the Puddles of Human Inventions, to the *Enthusiasms* of our Brain; not to the See of *Rome*, no nor to the Instructions of Angels; but the Writings of the *Prophets*, as they clear up the Declarations of the *Apostles*. The Church of *Rome* is not made here the Standard of Truth; but the Scriptures of the *Prophets* are to be the Touch-stone to the *Romans*, for the Trial of the Truth of the Gospel.

4. How great is the Goodness of God? The Borders of *Grace* are enlarged to the *Gentiles*, and not hid under the Skirts of the *Jews*. He that was so long the God of the *Jews*, is now also manifest to be the God of the *Gentiles*: The Gospel is now made known to all Nations, according to the Commandment of the Everlasting God. Not only in a way of Common Providence, but Special Grace; in Calling them to the Knowledge of himself, and a Justification of them by Faith, He hath brought Strangers to him, to the Adoption of Children, and lodged them under the Wings of the Covenant, that were before alienated from him through the universal Corruption of Nature. Now he hath manifested himself a God of Truth, mindful of his Promise in Blessing all Nations in the Seed of *Abraham*. The Fury of Devils, and the Violence of Men, could not hinder the propagation of this Gospel: Its Light hath been dispersed as far as that of the Sun; and that *Grace* that sounded in the *Gentiles Ears*, hath bent many of their Hearts to the Obedience of it.



5. Observe, That *Libertinism and Licentiousness find no encouragement in the Gospel. It was made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith.* The Goodness of God is publish'd, that our Enmity to him may be parted with. Christ's Righteousness is not offered to us to be put on, that we may rouse more warmly in our Lusts. The Doctrine of Grace commands us to give up our selves to Christ, to be accepted through him, and to be ruled by him. Obedience is due to God, as a Sovereign Lord in his Law; and 'tis due out of gratitude, as he is a God of Grace in the Gospel. The discovery of a further perfection in God weakens not the right of another, nor the obligation of the Duty the former Attribute claims at our hands. The Gospel frees us from the Curse, but not from the Duty and Service: *We are delivered from the hands of our Enemies, that we might serve God in Holiness and Righteousness,* Luke 1.74. *This is the will of God in the Gospel, even our Sanctification.* When a Prince strikes off a Malefactor's Chains, though he deliver him from the punishment of his Crime, he frees him not from the Duty of a Subject: His Pardon adds a greater obligation, than his Protection did before while he was Loyal. Christ's Righteousness gives us a Title to Heaven; but there must be a Holiness to give us a fitness for Heaven.

6. Observe, That *Evangelical Obedience, or the Obedience of Faith, is only acceptable to God. Obedience of Faith; Genitivus speciei*, noting the kind of Obedience God requires; an Obedience springing from Faith, animated and influenced by Faith. Not Obedience of Faith, as though Faith were the Rule, and the Law were abrogated; but to the Law as a Rule, and from Faith as a Principle. There is no true Obedience before Faith: *Heb. 11.6. Without Faith it is impossible to please God*; and therefore without Faith impossible to obey him. A good Work cannot proceed from a defil'd Mind and Conscience; and without Faith every man's Mind is darkned, and his Conscience polluted\*. Faith is the Band of Union to Christ, and Obedience is the Fruit of Union; we cannot bring forth fruit without being Branches†, and we cannot be Branches without Believing. Legitimate Fruit follows upon Marriage to Christ, not before it: *Rom. 7.4. That you should be married to another, even to him that is raised from the dead, that you should bring forth fruit unto God.* All Fruit before Marriage is Bastard, and Bastards were excluded from the Sanctuary. Our Persons must be first accepted in Christ, before our Services can be acceptable; those Works are not acceptable where the Person is not pardoned. Good Works flow from a pure Heart; but the Heart cannot be pure before Faith. All the Good Works reckoned up in the 11th Chapter of the Hebrews were from this Spring; those Heroes first believed, and then obeyed. *By Faith Abel was righteous before God*, without it his Sacrifice had been no better than Cain's: *By Faith Enoch pleased God*, and had a Divine Testimony to his Obedience before his Translation: *By Faith Abraham offered up Isaac*, without which he had been no better than a Murderer. All Obedience hath its Root in Faith, and is not done in our own strength, but in the strength and virtue of another, of Christ, whom God hath set forth as our Head and Root.

7. Observe, *Faith and Obedience are distinct, though inseparable: The Obedience of Faith.* Faith indeed is Obedience to a Gospel Command, which enjoins us to believe; but it is not all our Obedience. Justification and Sanctification are distinct Acts of God; Justification respects the Person, Sanctification the Nature; Justification is first in order of Nature, and Sanctification follows: They are distinct, but inseparable; every Justified Person hath a Sanctified Nature, and every Sanctified Nature supposeth a Justified Person. So Faith and Obedience are distinct; Faith as the Principle, Obedience as the Product; Faith as the Cause, Obedience as the Effect; the Cause and the Effect are not the same. By Faith we own Christ as our Lord; by Obedience we regulate our selves according to his Command. The acceptance of the Relation to him as a Subject, precedes the performance of our Duty: By Faith we receive his Law, and by Obedience we fulfil it. Faith makes us Gods Children, Gal. 3.26. Obedience manifests us to be Christ's Disciples, John 15.8. Faith is the Touchstone of Obedience; the Touchstone, and that which is tried by it, are not the same. But though they are distinct, yet they are inseparable.



separable. *Faith* and *Obedience* are joyned together; *Obedience* follows *Faith* at the heels. *Faith* purifies the heart, and a pure Heart cannot be without pure Actions. *Faith* unites us to Christ, whereby we partake of his Life; and a living Branch cannot be without fruit in its season, and much fruit, John 15.5. and that naturally from a newness of Spirit, Rom. 7.9. not constrained by the rigors of the Law, but drawn forth from a sweetness of Love; for *Faith* works by Love. The Love of God is the strong Motive, and Love to God is the quickning Principle; as there can be no *Obedience* without *Faith*, so no *Faith* without *Obedience*.

After all this, the *Apostle* ends with the celebration of the *Wisdom* of God; To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. The rich Discovery of the Gospel, cannot be thought of by a gracious Soul, without a return of Praise to God, and Admiration of his singular *Wisdom*.

*Wise God.*] His *Power* before, and his *Wisdom* here, are mentioned in conjunction (in which his *Goodness* is included, as interested in his establishing *Power*) as the ground of all the Glory and Praise God hath from his Creatures.

*Only Wise.*] As Christ saith, Mat. 19.17. None is good, but God; so the *Apostle* saith, None Wise, but God. As all Creatures are unclean in regard of his Purity; so they are all Fools in regard of his *Wisdom*, yea the glorious *Angels* themselves\*. *Wisdom* is the Royalty of God; the proper Dialect of all his Ways and Works. No Creature can lay claim to it; He is so Wise, that he is *Wisdom* it self. \* Job 4.18.

*Be glory through Jesus Christ.*] As God is only known in and by Christ, so he must be only worshipped and celebrated in and through Christ. In him we must Pray to him, and in him we must Praise him. As all Mercies flow from God through Christ to us, so all our Duties are to be presented to God through Christ.

In the Greek, *verbatim*, it runs thus; To the alone Wise God, through Jesus Christ, to him be glory for ever. But we must not understand it, as if God were Wise by Jesus Christ; but that Thanks is to be given to God through Christ, because in and by Christ God hath revealed his *Wisdom* to the World. The *Greek* hath a Repetition of the Article  $\delta$ , not exprest in the Translation, To him be glory. *Beza* expungeth this Article, but without reason, for  $\delta$  is as much as *unto*, To him; and joyning this, The only Wise God with the 25th Verse, To him that is of Power to establish you; Reading it thus, To him that is of Power to establish you, the only Wise God, leaving the rest in a Parenthesis, it runs smoothly, To him be glory through Jesus Christ. And *Crellius* the *Socinian* observes, that this Article  $\delta$ , which some leave out, might be industriously inserted by the *Apostle*, to shew, that the Glory we ascribe to God, is also given to Christ.

We may Observe; That neither in this place, nor any where in Scripture, is the *Virgin Mary*, or any of the *Saints*, associated with God or Christ in the Glory ascribed to them.

In the Words there is,

1. An Appropriation of *Wisdom* to God, and a Remotion of it from all Creatures; Only wise God.
2. A Glorifying him for it.

The Point I shall insist upon, is,

That *Wisdom* is a transcendent Excellency of the Divine Nature. We have Doctr. before spoken of the Knowledge of God, and the Infiniteness of it: The next Attribute is the *Wisdom* of God. Most, confound the Knowledge and *Wisdom* of God together; but there is a manifest distinction between them in our conception.

I shall handle it thus;

1. Shew what *Wisdom* is. Then lay down,
2. Some Propositions about the *Wisdom* of God. And shew,
3. That God is Wise, and only Wise.
4. Wherein his *Wisdom* appears.
5. The Use.

I. What



† A myrrour.  
Moral. Tom 3.  
p. 123.

1. *What Wisdom is.* Wisdom among the *Greeks*, first signified an eminent Perfection in any Art or Mystery; so a good Statuary, Engraver, or Limner, was called *Wise*, as having an excellent Knowledge in his particular Art. But afterwards the Title of *Wise* was appropriated to those that devoted themselves to the contemplation of the highest things, that served for a Foundation to Speculative Sciences †. But ordinarily we count a Man a Wise Man, when he conducts his Affairs with discretion, and governs his Passions with moderation, and carries himself with a due proportion and harmony in all his concerns.

But in Particular, *Wisdom* consists,

1. *In acting for a right End.* The chiefest part of Prudence is in fixing a right End, and in chusing fit Means, and directing them to that scope: To shoot at random is a mark of Folly. As he is the wisest Man, that hath the noblest End and fittest Means; so God is Infinitely Wise; as he is the most excellent Being, so he hath the most excellent End. As there is none more excellent than himself, nothing can be his End but himself: As he is the Cause of all, so he is the End of all; and he puts a true Byass into all the Means he useth to hit the Mark he aims at: *Of him, and through him, and to him are all things*, Rom. 11, 36.

2. *Wisdom consists, in observing all Circumstances for Action.* He is counted a Wise man, that lays hold of the fittest Opportunities to bring his designs about, that hath the fullest foresight of all the little Intrigues which may happen in a Business he is to manage, and Times every part of his Action in an exact harmony with the proper Minutes of it. God hath all the Circumstances of things in one entire Image before him; he hath a prospect of every little Creek in any design. He sees what Second Causes will act, and when they will act this or that; yea, he determines them to such and such Acts; so that it is impossible he should be mistaken, or miss of the due Season of bringing about his own Purposes. As he hath more Goodness, than to deceive any; so he hath more Understanding, than to be mistaken in any thing. Hence the Time of the Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour, is called the *Fulness of Time*, the proper Season for his coming. Every Circumstance about Christ was Tim'd according to the Predictions of God; even so little a thing as *not parting his Garment*, and the giving him *Gall and Vinegar to drink*: And all the Blessings he shows down upon his People, according to the Covenant of Grace, are said to come *in his season*, Ezek. 34, 25, 26.

3. *Wisdom consists, In willing and acting according to the right Reason, according to a right Judgment of things.* We never count a Willful man a Wise man, but him only that acts according to a right Rule, when right Counsels are taken and vigorously executed. The Resolves and Ways of God are not meer Will, but Will guided by the Reason and Counsel of his own Infinite Understanding; *Eph. 1. 11. Who works all things according to the counsel of his own will.* The Motions of the Divine Will are not rash, but follow the Proposals of the Divine Mind: He chooses that which is fittest to be done, so that all his Works are graceful, and all his Ways have a comeliness and *decorum* in them. Hence all his Ways are said to be *Judgment*, Deut. 32, 4. not meer Will.

Hence it appears, that *Wisdom* and *Knowledge* are two distinct Perfections. *Knowledge* hath its seat in the Speculative Understanding, *Wisdom* in the Practical. *Wisdom* and *Knowledge* are evidently distinguish'd as two several gifts of the Spirit in Man, 1 Cor. 12, 8. *To one is given by the Spirit the word of Wisdom, to another the word of Knowledge by the same Spirit.* Knowledge is an understanding of general Rules, and Wisdom is a drawing Conclusions from those Rules in order to particular cases. A Man may have the Knowledge of the whole Scripture, and have all Learning in the Treasury of his Memory, and yet be destitute of Skill to make use of them upon particular Occasions, and untie those knotty Questions which may be proposed to him, by a ready application of those Rules.

Again,



Again, *Knowledge* and *Wisdom* may be distinguish'd in our Conception, as two distinct Perfections in God: The *Knowledge* of God is his Understanding of all things; his *Wisdom* is the Skillful resolving and acting of all things. And the *Apostle*, in his Admiration of him, owns them as distinct, *Oh the depths of the riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God*, Rom. 11. 33. *Knowledge* is the Foundation of *Wisdom*, and antecedent to it; *Wisdom* the Superstructure upon *Knowledge*: Men may have *Knowledge* without *Wisdom*, but not *Wisdom* without *Knowledge*; according to our common Proverb, *The greatest Clerks are not the wisest Men*. All Practical *Knowledge* is founded in Speculation, either *Secundum rem*, as in a Man; or *Secundum rationem*, as in God. They agree in this, that they are both Acts of the Understanding; but *Knowledge* is the Apprehension of a thing, and *Wisdom* is the Appointing and Ordering of things. *Wisdom* is the splendor and lustre of *Knowledge* shining forth in Operations, and is an Act both of Understanding and Will; Understanding in Counselling and Contriving, Will in Resolving and Executing: *Counsel* and *Will* are link'd together, Ephes. 1. 11.

II. The Second thing is to lay down some *Propositions in general, concerning the Wisdom of God*.

1. *There is an Essential and a Personal Wisdom of God*. The *Essential Wisdom*, is the *Essence* of God; the *Personal Wisdom*, is the Son of God. *Christ* is called *Wisdom* by himself, Luke 7. 35. The *Wisdom of God* by the *Apostle*, 1 Cor. 1. 24. The *Wisdom* I speak of belongs to the Nature of God, and is considered as a necessary Perfection. The *Personal Wisdom* is called so, because he opens to us the Secrets of God. If the Son were that *Wisdom* whereby the Father is Wise, the Son would be also the *Essence* whereby the Father is God. If the Son were the *Wisdom* of the Father, whereby he is *Essentially* Wise; the Son would be the *Essence* of the Father, and the Father would have his *Essence* from the Son, since the *Wisdom* of God is the *Essence* of God; and so the Son would be the Father, if the *Wisdom* and Power of the Father were originally in the Son.

2. Therefore Secondly, *The Wisdom of God is the same with the Essence of God*. *Wisdom* in God is not a Habit added to his *Essence*, as it is in Man, but it is his *Essence*. 'Tis like the splendor of the Sun, the same with the Sun it self; or like the brightness of *Crystal*, which is not communicated to it by any thing else, as the Brightness of a Mountain is by the Beam of the Sun, but it is one with the *Crystal* it self. 'Tis not a Habit superadded to the Divine *Essence*; that would be repugnant to the Simplicity of God, and speak him compounded of divers Principles; it would be contrary to the Eternity of his Perfections: If he be Eternally Wise, his *Wisdom* is his *Essence*; for there is nothing Eternal, but the *Essence* of God. \* As the Sun melts some things, and hardens others; blackens some things, and whitens others, and produceth contrary qualities in different Subjects; yet it is but one and the same quality in the Sun, which is the cause of those contrary Operations: So the Perfections of God seem to be diverse in our Conceptions, yet they are but one and the same in God. The *Wisdom* of God, is God acting Prudently; as the Power of God, is God acting Powerfully, and the Justice of God, is God acting Righteously: And therefore 'tis more truly said, that God is *Wisdom, Justice, Truth, Power*, than that He is *Wise, Just, True, &c.* as if he were compounded of Substance and Qualities. All the Operations of God proceed from one Simple *Essence*; as all the Operations of the Mind of Man, though various, proceed from one faculty of Understanding.

3. *Wisdom is the Property of God alone. He is only Wise*. 'Tis an Honour peculiar to him. Upon the account that no Man deserved the Title of *Wise*, but that it was a Royalty belonging to God †, *Pythagoras* would not be called *Σοφός*, a Title given to their Learned Men; but *σοφιστής*. The Name *Philosopher*, arose out of a respect to this transcendent Perfection of God.

1. *God is only Wise necessarily*. As He is necessarily God, so he is necessarily Wise; for the Notion of *Wisdom* is inseparable from the Notion of a Deity. When we say *God is a Spirit*, is *True, Righteous, Wise*; we understand that he is transcendently these, by an intrinsic and absolute necessity, by virtue of his own *Essence*,

\* Maimon.  
Mor. Part 1.  
cap. 53.

† Laert. lib. 1.  
Proem.



Effience, without the Efficiency of any other, or any Efficiency in and by himself. God doth not make himself Wise, no more than he makes himself God. As he is a necessary Being in regard of his Life, so he is necessarily Wise in regard of his Understanding. *Synesius* saith, that *God is Effentiated, sanctified, by his Understanding*. He places the Substance of God in *Understanding* and *Wisdom*: *Wisdom* is the first vital Operation of God. He can no more be Unwise than he can be Untrue; for Folly in the Mind is much the same with Falsity in Speech. *Wisdom* among Men is gained by Age and Experience, furthered by Instructions and Exercise; but the *Wisdom* of God is his Nature. As the Sun cannot be without Light, while it remains a Sun; and as Eternity cannot be without Immortality; So neither can God be without *Wisdom*. As he only hath Immortality, *1 Tim. 6. 16.* not arbitrarily, but necessarily; so he only hath *Wisdom*: Not because he will be Wise, but because he cannot but be Wise. He cannot but contrive Counsels, and exert Operations, becoming the Greatness and Majesty of his Nature.

2. Therefore *only Wise originally*. God is *αὐτὸς ὁ ἀρχαῖος*. Men acquire *Wisdom* by the loss of their fairest years; but his *Wisdom* is the Perfection of the Divine Nature, not the birth of Study or the growth of Experience, but as necessary, as Eternal, as his Essence. He goes not out of himself to search *Wisdom*: He needs no more the Brains of Creatures in the contrivance of his Purposes, than he doth their Arm in the execution of them. He needs no Counsel, he receives no Counsel from any; *Rom. 11. 34. Who hath been his Counsellor?* and *Isai 40. 14. With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, or taught him in the path of Judgment, and taught him Knowledge, and showed to him the path of Understanding?* He is the only Fountain of *Wisdom* to others; Angels and Men have what *Wisdom* they have, by communication from him. All created *Wisdom* is a spark of the Divine Light, like that of the Stars borrowed from the Sun. He that borrows *Wisdom* from another, and doth not originally possess it in his own Nature, cannot properly be called *Wise*. As God is the only Being, in regard that all other Beings are derived from him; so he is only *Wise*, because all other *Wisdom* flows from him. He is the Spring of *Wisdom* to all; none the Original of *Wisdom* to him.

3. Therefore *only Wise perfectly*. There is no cloud upon his Understanding. He hath a distinct and certain Knowledge of all things that can fall under action: As he hath a perfect Knowledge without Ignorance, so he hath a Beautiful *Wisdom* without Mole or Wart. Men are wise, yet have not an Understanding so vast as to grasp all things; nor a Perspicacity so clear, as to penetrate into the depths of all Beings. Angels have more delightful and lively sparks of *Wisdom*, yet so imperfect, that in regard of the *Wisdom* of God they are *charged with folly*, *Job 4. 18.* Their *Wisdom* as well as their Holiness is veiled in the Presence of God. It vanisheth, as the glowing of a Fire doth before the beauty of the Sun; or as a Light of a Candle in the midst of a Sunshine contracts it self, and none of its Rays are seen, but in the body of the Flame. The Angels are not perfectly *Wise*, because they are not perfectly Knowing: The Gospel, the great Discovery of Gods *Wisdom*, was hid from them for Ages.

4. Therefore *only Wise universally*. *Wisdom* in one Man is of one sort, in another of another sort; one is a wise Tradesman, another a wise Statesman, and another a wise Philosopher: One is wise in the business of the World, another is wise in Divine Concerns. One hath not so much of plenty of one sort, but he may have a scantiness in another; one may be wise for Invention, and foolish in Execution; an Artificer may have skill to frame an Engine, and not skill to use it: The ground that is fit for *Olives*, may not be fit for Vines; that will bear one sort of Grain and not another. But God hath an Universal *Wisdom*, because his Nature is *Wise*; 'tis not limited, but hovers over every thing, shines in every Being. His Executions are as wise as his Contrivances: He is *Wise* in his Resolves, and wise in his Ways; *Wise* in all the varieties of his Works of Creation, Government, Redemption. A. his Will wills all things, and his Power effects all things; so his



his wisdom is the universal Director of the motions of his will, and the executions of his power: As his Righteousness is the measure of the matter of his Actions, so his Wisdom is the Rule that directs the manner of his Actions. The absolute power of God is not an unruly power: His wisdom orders all things, so that nothing is done, but what is fit and convenient, and agreeable to so excellent a Being: As he cannot do an unjust thing because of his righteousness, so he cannot do an unwise act, because of his infinite wisdom. Though God be not necessitated to any Operation without himself, as to the Creation of any thing, yet supposing he will act, his wisdom necessitates him to do that which is congruous, as his righteousness necessitates him to do that which is just: So that though the will of God be the principle, yet his wisdom is the rule of his Actions. We must in our conceiving of the order, suppose wisdom antecedent to will: None that acknowledges a God, can have such an impious thought, as to asfix temerity and rashness to any of his proceedings.

All his Decrees are drawn out of the infinite Treasury of Wisdom in himself. \* He resolves nothing about any of his Creatures without Reason; but the reason of his purposes is in himself, and springs from himself, and not from the Creatures: There is not one thing that he wills, but *he wills by counsel, and works by counsel*, Eph. 1. 11. Counsel writ down every line, every letter, in his eternal Book; and all the Orders are drawn out from thence by his wisdom and will: What was illustrious in the contrivance, glitters in the execution. His understanding and will are infinite; what is therefore the act of his will, is the result of his understanding, and therefore rational: His understanding and will joyn hands; there is no contest in God, will against mind, and mind against will; they are one in God, one in his resolves, and one in all his works.

\* Polhill. d.  
gainst Sher-  
lock, p. 377.

5. Therefore he is *only wise perpetually*. As the wisdom of man is got by ripeness of Age, so it is lost by decay of years; 'tis got by instruction, and lost by dotage. The perfectest minds, when in the wane, have been darkned with folly: *Nebuchadnezzar* that was wise for a man, became as foolish as a Brute. But the *Ancient of days* is an unchangeable Possessor of Prudence; his wisdom is a mirrour of brightness, without a defacing spot. It was possessed by him *in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old*, Prov. 8. 22. and he can never be dispossessed of it in the end of his works. 'Tis inseparable from him: The Being of his Godhead may as soon cease, as the Beauty of his Mind; *with him is wisdom*, Job 12. 13. it is inseparable from him, therefore as durable as his Essence. 'Tis a wisdom infinite, and therefore without increase or decrease in it self. The experience of so many Ages in the Government of the World, hath added nothing to the immensity of it; as the shining of the Sun since the Creation of the World, hath added nothing to the light of that glorious Body. As Ignorance never darkens his knowledge, so Folly never disgraces his Prudence: God infatuates men, but neither Men nor Devils can infatuate God; he is unerringly wise; his Counsel doth not vary and flatter; 'tis not one day one Counsel, and another day another, but it stands like an immoveable Rock, or a Mountain of Brasse. *The Counsel of the Lord stands for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all Generations*, Psal. 33. 11.

6. He is *only incomprehensibly wise*. His thoughts are deep, Psal. 92. 5. His judgments unsearchable, his ways past finding out, Rom. 11. 33. Depths that cannot be fathomed. A splendor, more dazling to our dimm minds, than the light of the Sun to our weak eyes. The wisdom of one man may be comprehended by another, and over comprehended; and often men are understood by others to be wiser in their Actions, than they understand themselves to be. And the wisdom of one Angel may be measured by another Angel of the same perfection. But as the Essence, so the wisdom of God is incomprehensible to any Creature; God is only comprehended by God: The secrets of wisdom in God, are double to the expressions of it in his works, Job 11. 6, 7. *Canst thou by searching find out God,*

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There



There is an unfathomable depth in all his Decrees, in all his Works; we cannot comprehend the reason of his Works, much less that of his Decrees, much less that in his Nature; because his wisdom being infinite as well as his power, can no more act to the highest pitch, than his power. As his power is not terminated by what he hath wrought, but he could give further testimonies of it; so neither is his wisdom, but he could furnish us with infinite expressions and pieces of his skill. As in regard of his Immensity, he is not bounded by the limits of place; in regard of his Eternity, not measured by the Minutes of Time; in regard of his Power, not terminated with this or that number of Objects; so in regard of his Wisdom, he is not confin'd to this or that particular mode of working; so that in regard of the reason of his Actions, as well as the Glory and Majesty of his Nature, he dwells in *unapproachable light*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. and whatsoever we understand of his wisdom in Creation and Providence, is infinitely less than what is in himself, and his own unbounded Nature.

Many things in *Scripture* are declar'd chiefly to be the acts of the Divine will, yet we must not think that they were acts of meer will without wisdom, but they are represented so to us, because we are not capable of understanding the infinite Reason of its acts: His Sovereignty is more intelligible to us than his Wisdom. We can better know the Commands of a Superiour, and the Laws of a Prince, than understand the reason that gave birth to those Laws. We may know the Orders of the Divine will, as they are publish'd, but not the sublime Reason of his will. Though Election be an act of God's Sovereignty, and he hath no cause from without to determine him; yet his infinite wisdom stood not silent while meer Dominion acted. Whatsoever God doth, he doth wisely, as well as sovereignly; though that wisdom which lies in the secret places of the Divine Being, be as incomprehensible to us, as the effects of his Sovereignty and Power in the World are visible: God can give a reason of his proceeding, and that drawn from himself, though we understand it not.

The causes of things visible lye hid from us; Doth any man know how to distinguish the seminal vertue of a small Seed from the Body of it, and in what nook and corner that lies, and what that is that spreads it self in so fair a Plant, and so many Flowers? Can we comprehend the Justice of God's proceedings in the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the Godly? Yet as we must conclude them the fruits of an unerring righteousness, so we must conclude all his actions the fruits of an unspotted wisdom, though the concatenation of all his counsels is not intelligible to us; for he is as essentially and necessarily wise, as he is essentially and necessarily good and righteous.

God is not only so wise that nothing more wise can be conceiv'd, but he is more wise than can be imagin'd; something greater in all his Perfections than can be comprehended by any Creature. 'Tis a foolish thing therefore to question that which we cannot comprehend: we should adore it instead of disputing against it; and take it for granted, that God would not order any thing, were it not agreeable to the Sovereignty of his wisdom, as well as that of his will. Though the reason of man proceed from the wisdom of God, yet there is more difference between the reason of man, and the wisdom of God, than between the light of the Sun, and the feeble shining of the Glowworm; yet we presume to censure the ways of God, as if our purblind reason had a reach above him.

7. *God is only wise infallibly.* The wisest men meet with rubs in the way, that make them fall short of what they aim at; they often design, and fail; then begin again, and yet all their counsels end in smoke, and none of them arrive at perfection. If the wisest Angels lay a plot, they may be disappointed; for though they are higher and wiser than man, yet there is one higher and wiser than they, that can check their Projects. God always compasseth his end, never fails of any thing he designs and aims at; all his undertakings are counsel and will; as nothing can resist the efficacy of his will, so nothing can countermine the skill of his counsel; *There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord*, Prov. 21. 30. He compasseth his ends by those actions

of



of Men and Devils, wherein they think to cross him; they shoot at their own Mark, and hit his. *Lucifer's* plot by Divine wisdom fulfilled God's purpose against *Lucifer's* mind. The counsel of Redemption by Christ, the end of the Creation of the World, rode into the World upon the back of the Serpents Temptation. God never mistakes the means, nor can there be any disappointments, to make him vary his Counsels, and pitch upon other means than what before he had ordain'd. His word that goeth forth of his mouth shall not return to him void, but it shall accomplish that which he pleases, and it shall prosper in the thing where-to he sent it, *Isa.* 55. 11. What is said of his word, is true of his counsel; it shall prosper in the thing for which it is appointed; it cannot be defeated by all the Legions of Men and Devils, for as he thinks, so shall it come to pass; and as he hath purposed, so shall it stand; The Lord hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? *Isa.* 14. 24, 27. The wisdom of the Creature is a drop from the wisdom of God, and is like a drop to the Ocean, and a shadow to the Sun; and therefore is not able to mate the wisdom of God, which is infinite and boundless. No wisdom is exempted from mistakes, but the Divine: He is wise in all his Resolves, and never calls back his words and purposes, *Isa.* 31. 2.

III. The third General is to prove that God is wise.

This is ascrib'd to God in *Scripture*; *Deut.* 2. 20. *Wisdom and might are his*; Wisdom to contrive, and Power to effect. \* Where should Wisdom dwell, but in the head of a Deity; and where should Power triumph, but in the arm of Omnipotency? All that God doth, he doth artificially, skilfully; whence he is called the Builder of the Heavens, *Heb.* 11. 10. *Teyxime*, an artificial and curious Builder, a Builder by Art. And that word, *Prov.* 8. 30. meant of Christ, *Then I was by him as one brought up with him*; some render it, *Then was I the curious Artificer*; and the same word is translated a cunning workman, *Cant.* 7. 5. For this cause Counsel is ascrib'd to God †; not properly; for Counsel implies something of Ignorance, or Irresolution, antecedent to the consultation, and a posture of will afterwards, which was not before. Counsel is properly a laborious deliberation, and a reasoning of things: An invention of means for the attainment of the end, after a discussing and reasoning of all the doubts which arise *pro re nata*, about the matter in counsel: But God hath no need to deliberate in himself, what are the best means to accomplish his ends: He is never ignorant, or undetermin'd, what course he should take, as men are before they consult. But it is an expression in condescension to our Capacity, to signify that God doth nothing but with reason and understanding, with the highest prudence, and for the most glorious ends, as men do after consultation, and the weighing of every foreseen circumstance.

Though he acts all things Sovereignly by his will, yet he acts all things wisely by his understanding; and there is not a decree of his will, but he can render a satisfactory reason for in the face of Men and Angels. As he is the Cause of all things, so he hath the highest wisdom for the ordering of all things. If wisdom among men be the knowledge of Divine and Human things, God must be infinitely wise, since knowledge is most radiant in him; he knows what Angels and Men do, and infinitely more; what is known by them obscurely, is known by him clearly: What is known by man after it is done, was known by God before it was wrought. By his wisdom as much as by any thing, he infinitely differs from all his Creatures; as by wisdom Man differs from a Brute. We cannot frame a notion of God, without conceiving him infinitely wise. We should render him very inconsiderable, to imagine him furnish'd with an infinite knowledge, and not have an infinite wisdom to make use of that knowledge; or to fancy him with a mighty power, destitute of prudence. Knowledge without prudence is an eye without motion; and power without discretion, is an arm without a head; a hand to act, without understanding to contrive and model; a strength to act, without reason to know how to act: It would be a miserable notion of a God, to fancy him with a brutish and unguided power. The *Heathens* therefore had, and could not but have this natural notion of God. *Plato* therefore calls him *Mens* ‡, and *Cleanthes* used to call God *Reason*, and *Socrates* thought the title of *Zeus* too magnificent to be attributed to any thing else but God alone.

\* Culverwell.  
light of Nature;  
p. 32.

† *Isa.* 46. 10.  
*Jer.* 22. 19.  
Great in counsel  
Job 12. 13.  
He hath counsel  
and understanding

‡ *Eugub. per  
Philosoph. lib  
1. cap. 5.*



Arguments to prove that God is wise.

Reas. 1. *God could not be infinitely perfect without wisdom.* A rational Nature is better than an irrational Nature. A man is not a perfect man without reason; how can God without it, be an infinitely perfect God. Wisdom is the most eminent of all Vertues; all the other perfections of God without this, would be as a body without an eye, a soul without understanding. A Christian's Graces want their lustre, when they are destitute of the guidance of wisdom: Mercy is a feebleness, and Justice a cruelty, Patience a timorousness, and Courage a madness, without the conduct of wisdom; so the Patience of God would be cowardise, his Power an oppression, his Justice a tyranny, without wisdom as the Spring and Holiness as the Rule. No attribute of God could shine with a due lustre and brightness without it. Power is a great perfection, but wisdom a greater \*. Wisdom may be without much power, as in *Bees* and *Ants*; but power is a tyrannical thing without wisdom and righteousness. The *Pilot* is more valuable because of his skill, than the Gally Slave because of his strength; and the conduct of a *General* more estimable than the might of a private Souldier. Generals are chosen more by their skill to guide, than their strength to act; What a Clod is a man without Prudence; what a Nothing would God be without it? This is the Salt that gives relish to all other perfections in a Creature: This is the Jewel in the Ring of all the Excellencies of the Divine Nature, and Holiness is the splendor of that Jewel.

\* *Latet magnam  
sit posse, minus  
tamen est sapi-*  
entia.

Now God being the *first Being*, possesses whatsoever is most noble in any Being. If therefore Wisdom, which is the most noble perfection in any Creature, were wanting to God, he would be deficient in that which is the highest Excellency. God being the *living God*, as he is frequently termed in *Scripture*, he hath therefore the most perfect manner of living, and that must be a pure and intellectual life: Being essentially living, he is essentially in the highest degree of living. As he hath an infinite life above all Creatures; so he hath an infinite intellectual life, and therefore an infinite Wisdom; whence some have called God not *sapientem*, but *super-sapientem*†, not only wise, but above all wisdom.

† *Suarez de lib. 1.  
de 1. cap. 3 p.  
12.*

Reas. 2. *Without infinite Wisdom he could not govern the World.* Without wisdom in forming the Matter, which was made by Divine power, the World could have been no other than a *Chaos*; and without wisdom in Government, it could have been no other than a heap of Confusion; without wisdom the World could not have been created in the posture it is. Creation supposeth a determination of the will putting power upon acting; the determination of the will supposeth the counsel of the understanding, determining the will: No work, but supposeth understanding as well as will in a rational Agent. As without skill things could not be created, so without it things cannot be governed. *Reason* is a necessary perfection to him that presides over all things: Without knowledge there could not be in God a foundation for Government, and without wisdom there could not be an exercise of Government; and without the most excellent wisdom, he could not be the most excellent Governour. He could not be an universal Governour, without a universal wisdom; nor the sole Governour without an unimitable wisdom; nor an independent Governour without an original and independent wisdom; nor a perpetual Governour without an incorruptible wisdom. He would not be the Lord of the World in all points, without skill to order the affairs of it. Power and wisdom are foundations of all Authority and Government: Wisdom to know how to rule, and command; Power to make those Commands obeyed: No regular Order could issue out without the first, nor could any order be enforced without the second. A feeble wisdom, and a brutish power, seldom or never produce any good effect. Magistracy without wisdom, would be a frantick power, a rash conduct; like a strong arm when the eye is out, it strikes it knows not what, and leads it knows not whither. Wisdom without power, would be like a great body without feet \*, like the knowledge of a *Pilot* that hath lost his arm, who though he knows the Rule of Navigation, and what Course to follow in his Voyage, yet cannot manage the Helm: But when those two, wisdom and power are link't together, there ariseth from both a fitness for Government: There is wisdom to propose an end, and both wisdom and power to employ means that conduct to that end. And there-

\* *Amirant. mo-  
ral.*



therefore when God demonstrates to *Job* his right of Government, and the unreasonableness of *Job's* quarrelling with his proceedings, he chiefly urgeth upon him the consideration of those *two excellencies* of his Nature, *power* and *wisdom*, which are exprest in his Works †. A Prince without wisdom, is but a Title without a Capacity to perform the Office; no man without it is fit for government: Nor could God without wisdom exercise a just Dominion in the World. He hath therefore the highest wisdom, since he is the universal Governour. That wisdom which is able to govern a Family, may not be able to govern a City; and that wisdom which governs a City, may not be able to govern a Nation or Kingdom, much less a World. The bounds of God's government being greater than any, his wisdom for government must needs surmount the wisdom of all. || And though the Creatures be not in number actually infinite, yet they cannot be well governed, but by one endowed with infinite Discretion. Providential government can be no more without infinite wisdom, than infinite wisdom can be without Providence.

† Chap. 38, 39.  
4-- 41.

|| Amyrald.  
de Prov. Titul. 1.  
111.

Reas. 3. *The Creatures working for an end, without their own knowledge, demonstrates the wisdom of God that guides them.* All things in the World work for some end; the ends are unknown to them, though many of their ends are visible to us. As there was some prime Cause, which by his power inspir'd them with their several instincts, so there must be some supream wisdom, which moves and guides them to their end. As their Being manifests his power that endowed them, so the acting according to the rules of their Nature, which they themselves understand not, manifests his wisdom in directing them. Every thing that acts for an end, must know that end, or be directed by another to attain that end. The Arrow doth not know who shoots it, or to what end it is shot, or what Mark is aimed at; but the Archer that puts it in, and darts it out of the Bow, knows. A Watch hath a regular motion, but neither the Spring nor the Wheels that move, know the end of their motion; no man will judge a wisdom to be in the Watch, but in the Artificer that dispos'd the Wheels and Spring, by a joint combination to produce such a motion for such an end. Doth either the Sun that enlivens the Earth, or the Earth that travels with the Plant, know what Plant it produceth in such a Soil, what temper it should be of, what fruit it should bear, and of what colour? What Plant knows its own medicinal qualities, its own beautiful flowers, and for what use they are ordain'd? When it strikes up its head from the Earth, doth it know what proportion of them there will be? Yet it produceth all these things in a state of ignorance. The Sun warms the Earth, concocts the humours, excites the vertue of it, and cherishes the Seeds, which are cast into her lap, yet all unknown to the Sun or the Earth. Since therefore that Nature, that is the immediate cause of those things, doth not understand its own quality, nor operation, nor the end of its action, that which thus directs them must be conceived to have an infinite wisdom. When things act by a Rule they know not, and move for an end they understand not, and yet work harmoniously together for one end, that all of them, we are sure, are ignorant of, it mounts up our minds to acknowledge the wisdom of that supream Cause, that hath rang'd all these inferiour Causes in their order, and imprinted upon them the Laws of their motions, according to the *Ideas* in his own Mind, who orders the Rule by which they act, and the end for which they act, and directs every motion according to their several Natures, and therefore is possessed with infinite wisdom in his own Nature.

Reas. 4. *God is the fountain of all wisdom in the creatures and therefore is infinitely wise himself.* As he hath a fulness of being in himself, because the streams of being are derived to other things from him; So he hath a fulness of wisdom, because he is the spring of wisdom to Angels and men. That Being must be infinitely wise, from whence all other wisdom derives its original: For nothing can be in the effect, which is not eminently in the cause; the cause is alway more perfect than the effect. If therefore the creatures are wise, the Creator must be much more wise. If the Creator were destitute of wisdom, the creature would be much more perfect than the Creator. If you consider the wisdom of the *Spider* in her web, which is both her house and net; the artifice of the *Bee* in her Comb, which is both her chamber



chamber and granary; the provision of the Pismire in her repositories for corn; the wisdom of the Creator is illustrated by them; whatsoever excellency you see in any creature, is an Image of some excellency in God. The skill of the artificer is visible in the fruits of his Art; a workman transcribes his spirit in the work of his hands. But the wisdom of rational creatures, as men, doth more illustrate it: All Arts among men are the rays of divine Wisdom shining upon them, and by a common gift of the Spirit enlightning their minds to curious inventions, as *Prov. 8. 12. I wisdom find out the knowledge of witty inventions*; that is, I give a faculty to men to find them out; without my wisdom, all things would be buried in darkness and ignorance: Whatsoever wisdom there is in the World, it is but a shadow of the wisdom of God, a small Rivulet derived, from him, a spark leaping out from Uncreated Wisdom. *Isa 54. 16. He created the Smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and makes the Instruments*: The skill to use those weapons in War-like Enterprises is from him, *I have created the waster to destroy*; 'Tis not meant of creating their Persons, but communicating to them their Art; He speaks it there to expell fear from the Church of all war-like preparations against them: He had given Men the skill to form and use Weapons, and could as well strip them of it, and defeat their purposes: The Art of husbandry is a fruit of divine teaching, *Isa. 28. 24, 25. If those lower kinds of Knowledge, that are common to all Nations, and easily learn'd by all, are discoveries of Divine Wisdom, much more the nobler Sciences, intellectual and Political Wisdom, Dan. 2. 21. He gives Wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding*; speaking of the more abstruse parts of knowledge *The inspiration of the Almighty gives Understanding, Job. 32. 8. Hence the Wisdom which Solomon exprest in the Harlots case, 1 Kings 3. 28. was in the Judgment of all Israel, the Wisdom of God; that is, a fruit of Divine Wisdom, a beam communicated to him from God. Every mans Soul is endowed more or less with those noble qualities: The Soul of every man exceeds that of a Brute; If the streams be so excellent, the Fountain must be fuller and clearer. The first Spirit must infinitely more possess, what other Spirits derive from him by Creation; Were the Wisdom of all the Angels in Heaven and men on Earth collected in one Spirit, it must be infinitely less than what is in the Spring; for no Creature can be equal to the Creator. As the highest Creature already made, or that we can conceive may be made by Infinite Power, would be infinitely below God in the Notion of a Creature, so it would be infinitely below God in the Notion of Wise.*

IV. The fourth Thing is, *Wherein the Wisdom of God appears.*

It appears (1.) In Creation, (2.) In Government, (3.) In Redemption.

1. In Creation. As in a Musical Instrument, there is first the skill of the Workman in the frame; then the skill of the Musician in stringing it, proper for such Musical Notes as he will express upon it; and after that the tempering of the Strings by various stops to a delightful Harmony: So is the Wisdom of God seen in framing the World, then in tuning it, and afterwards in the motion of the several Creatures. The Fabrick of the World is called the Wisdom of God; *1 Cor. 1. 21. After that in the Wisdom of God the World by Wisdom knew not God; i. e. by the Creation the World knew not God; the framing Cause is there put for the Effect and the Work framed: Because the Divine Wisdom slept forth in the Creatures to a publick appearance, as if it had presented it self in a visible shape to Man, giving Instructions in and by the Creatures, to know and adore him. What we translate 1 Gen. 1. In the beginning God Created the Heaven and the earth, the Targum expresth, In wisdom God created the Heaven and the Earth. Both bear a stamp of this perfection on them: And when the Apostle tels the Romans, Rom. 1. 20. the invisible things of God were clearly understood by the things that are made; the word he uses is, ποιήματα, not ἔργα; this signifies a work of labour, but τέχνη, a work of skill, or a Poem. The whole Creation is a Poem, every Species a Stanza, and every individual Creature a Verse in it. The Creation presents us with a prospect of the Wisdom of God, as a Poem doth the Reader with the wit and fancy of the Composer: By wisdom he created the Earth, Pro. 3. 19. and stretched out the Heavens by discretion, Jer. 10. 12. There is not any thing so mean, so small, but*  
Glitters

\* *Opus opus intelligentia.*



Glitters with a beam of Divine skill; and the consideration of them would justly make every man subscribe to that of the *Psalmist*, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in Wisdom hast thou made them all.* *Psalm*. 104. 24. All, the least as well as the greatest, and the meanest as well as the noblest; even those creatures which seem ugly and deformed to us, as *Toads*, &c. because they fall short of those perfections which are the dowry of other *Animals*: In these there is a foot-step of Divine Wisdom, since they were not produced by him at random, but determin'd to some particular end, and design'd to some usefulness, as parts of the World in their several natures and stations. God could never have had a satisfaction in the review of his works, and pronounced them *good* or *comely*, as he did, *Gen.* 1. 31. had they not been agreeable to that eternal original Copy in his own mind: 'Tis said he was *refresh'd*, viz. with that review, *Exod.* 31. 17. which could not have been, if his piercing eye had found any defect in any thing which had sprung out of his hand, or an unsuitableness to that end for which he Created them. He seems to do as a man that hath made a curious and polite work, with exact care to peer about every part and line, if he could perceive any imperfection in it, to rectify the mistake: But no defect was found by the infinitely wise God upon this second examination.

This Wisdom of the Creation appears,

- (1.) In the variety, (2.) In the beauty, (3.) The fitness of every Creature for its use, (4.) The subordination of one Creature to another, and the joint concurrence of all to one common end.

1. In the Variety. *Psalm*. 104. 24. *O Lord how manifold are thy works! How great a variety is there* ■ *Animals and Plants, with a great variety of forms, Shapes, Figurations, Colours, various smells, vertues and qualities! and this rarity is produced from one and the same Matter, as Beasts and Plants from the Earth; Gen.* 1. 11. 24. *Let the Earth bring forth living Creatures; and the Earth brought forth grass and the herb yielding seed after his kind: Such diversity of Fowl and Fish from the water; Gen.* 1. 20. *Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving Creature that hath life, and Fowl that may fly; Such a beautiful and active variety from so dul a matter as the Earth; so solid a variety from so fluid a matter as the Water; so noble a piece as the body of man, with such variety of members, fit to entertain a more excellent Soul as a guest, from so mean a matter as the dust of the ground, Gen.* 2. 7. This extraction of such variety of forms out of one single and dul matter, is the Chemistry of Divine wisdom: 'Tis a greater skill to frame noble Bodies of vile Matter, as varieties of precious Vessels of Clay and Earth, than of a nobler Matter, as Gold and Silver.

Again, all those varieties propagate *their kind* in every particular and quality of their nature, & uniformly bring forth exact copies according to the first pattern God made of the *kind*, *Gen.* 1. 11, 12. 24. Consider also how the same piece of ground is garnisht with Plants and Flowers of several vertues, Fruits, Colours, Scents, without our being able to perceive any variety in the Earth that breeds them, and not so great a difference in the Roots that bear them. Add to this, the diversities of Birds of different Colours, Shapes, Notes, consisting of various Parts, Wings like Oars to cut the Air, & Tails as the Rudder of a Ship to guide their motion.

How various also are the Endowments of the Creatures? some have Vegetation, and the power of growth; others have the addition of Sense, and others the excellency of Reason; something wherein all agree, and something wherein all differ; variety in unity, and unity in variety: The wisdom of the Workman had not been so conspicuous, had there been only one degree of goodness: The greatest skill is seen in the greatest variety.

The comeliness of the Body is visible in the variety of Members, and their usefulness to one another; What an inform thing had Man been, had he been all Ear, or all Eye? If God had made all the Stars to be Suns, it would have been a demonstration of his Power, but perhaps less of his Wisdom; No Creatures, with the Natures they now have, could have continued in being under so much heat;



heat: There was no less Wisdom went to the frame of the least, than to the greatest Creature. It speaks more art in a Limner to paint a *Landkip* exactly, than to draw the Sun, though the Sun be a more glorious Body.

I might instance also in the different Characters and Features imprinted upon the Countenances of Men and Women, the differences of Voices and Statures, whereby they are distinguished from one another: These are the Foundations of Order and of Human Society and Administration of Justice; what Confusion would have been, if a grown-up Son could not be known from his Father, the Magistrate from the Subject, the Creditor from the Debtor, the Innocent from the Criminal? The Laws God hath given to Mankind, could not have been put in execution: This variety speaks the wisdom of God.

2. The wisdom of the Creation appears in the beauty and order and situation of the several Creatures. Eccles. 3. 11. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time.* As their Being was a fruit of Divine Power, so their Order is a fruit of Divine wisdom. All Creatures are as Members in the great Body of the World, proportion'd to one another, and contributing to the beauty of the whole; \* so that if the particular forms of every thing, the union of all for the Composition of the World, and the Laws which are established in the Order of Nature for its conservation, be considered, it would ravish us with an admiration of God: All the Creatures are as so many Pictures or Statues, exactly fram'd by line; *Psal. 19. 4. Their Line is gone through all the Earth; Their Line, a measuring Line, or a Carpenters Rule, whereby he proportions several pieces to be exactly linkt and coupled together. Their Line, that is, their harmonious proportion, and the instruction from it is gone forth through all the Earth. Upon the account of this harmony, some of the ancient Heathens framed the Images of their Gods with Musical Instruments in their hands, signifying that God wrought all things in a due proportion †.*

The Heavens speak this wisdom in their Order.

The Revolutions of the Sun and Moon determine the Seasons of the Year, and make Day and Night in an orderly Succession. The Stars beautifie the Heavens, and influence the Earth, and keep their Courses, *Judges 5. 20.* They keep their Stations without interfering with one another; and though they have rould about for so many Ages, they observe their distinct Laws, and in the variety of their Motions have not disturb'd one anothers Functions.

|| The Sun is set as the heart in the midst of this great Body, to afford warmth to all: Had it been set lower, it had long since turned the Earth into flame and ashes: Had it been placed higher, the Earth would have wanted the nourishment and refreshment necessary for it: Too much nearness had ruin'd the Earth by parching heat, and too great a distance had destroy'd the Earth by starving it with cold.

The Sun hath also its appointed Motion; had it been fixed without motion, half of the Earth had been unprofitable; there had been a perpetual darkness in a moiety of it; nothing had been produced for nourishment, and so it had been rendred uninhabitable: But now by this motion, it visits all the *Climates* of the World, runs its Circuit, so that nothing is hid from the heat thereof, *Psal. 19. 6.* It imparts its vertue to every Corner of the World in its daily and yearly visits. Had it been fixed, the Fruits of the Earth under it had been parch't and destroy'd before their Maturity; but all those Inconveniencies are provided against by the perpetual Motion of the Sun.

This Motion is orderly \*; It makes its daily Course from East to West, its yearly Motion from North to South: It goes to the North, till it comes to the Point God hath set it, and then turns back to the South, and gains some point every day: It never riseth nor sets in the same place one day, where it did the day before. The World is never without its light; some see it Rising the same moment we see its Setting.

The Earth also speaks the Divine wisdom; 'tis the Pavement of the World, as the Heaven is the Ceiling of Fretwork. † Tis placed lowermost, as being the heaviest Body, and fit to receive the weightiest Matter, and provided as an Habitation

\* Amyraut.  
Moral Phil. l. 1.  
p. 257.

† Mountag. &  
Gazet. Selden,  
p. 281.  
Plurarch. calls  
God *dequomde*  
by measure, he  
saith, nothing  
was made  
without measure.

|| Charlton  
Light of Na-  
ture, p. 57.

\* Daille. mol.  
p. 483.

† Amyraut.  
p. 101. cap. 5.



tation proper for those Creatures, which derive the Matter of their Bodies from it, and partake of its Earthy Nature; and garnisht with other Creatures for the profit and pleasure of man.

The Sea also speaks the same Divine Wisdom. *He strengthened the Fountains of the Deep, and gave the Sea a decree, that it should not pass his Command*, Prov. 8. 28, 29. He hath given it certain Bounds, that it should not overflow the Earth, Job 28. 11. It contains it self in the situation wherein God hath placed it, and doth not transgress its bounds. What if some part of a Country, a little Spot, hath been overflowed by it, and groaned under its Waves? yet for the main, it retains the same Channells wherein it was at first lodged.

All Creatures are cloathed with an outward Beauty, and endowed with an inward Harmony; there is an agreement in all parts of this great Body; every one is beautiful and orderly; but the Beauty of the World results from all of them dispos'd and linkt together.

3. This Wisdom is seen in the fitness of every thing for its end, and the usefulness of it. Divine Wisdom is more illustrious in the fitness and usefulness of this great variety, than in the Composure of their distinct parts: As the Artificers Skill is more eminent in fitting the Wheels, and setting them in order for their due motion, than in the external Fabrick of the Materials which compose the Clock.

After the most diligent inspection, there can be found nothing in the Creation unprofitable; nothing but is capable of some Service, either for the support of our Bodies, recreation of our Senses, or Moral Instruction of our Minds: Not the least Creature, but is formed and shap'd and furnish'd with Members and Parts, in a due proportion for its end and service in the World; nothing is superfluous, nothing defective.

The Earth is fitted in its parts\*; the Valleys are appointed for Granaries, the Mountains to shadow them from the scorching heat of the Sun; the Rivers like veins, carry refreshment to every Member of this Body; Plants & Trees thrive on the face of the Earth, and Metals are ingendred in the Bowels of it, for Materials for Building and other uses for the service of Man. *There he causes the Grass to grow for the Cattle, and Herb for the Service of Man, that he may bring forth food out of the Earth*, Psal. 104. 14.

\* Amyrant  
sur diverses  
Text. p. 127.

The Sea is fitted for use; 'tis a Fish-pond for the Nourishment of Man; a Boundary for the dividing of Lands and several Dominions; It joyns together Nations far distant: A great Vessel for Commerce, Psal. 104. 26. *There goe the Ships*. It affords Vapours to the Clouds, wherewith to water the Earth, which the Sun draws up, separating the finer from the salter parts, that the Earth may be fruitful, without being burthened with barrenness by the salt. The Sea hath also its Salt, its ebbs and floods; the one as Brine, the other as Motion, to preserve it from Putrefaction, that it may not be Contagious to the rest of the World.

Showers are appointed to refresh the Bodies of living Creatures, to open the Womb of the Earth, and water the Ground to make it fruitful, Psal. 104. 3. The Clouds therefore are called the Chariots of God; he rides in them in the manifestation of his goodness and wisdom.

† Winds are fitted to purifie the Air, to preserve it from Putrefaction; to carry the Clouds to several parts, to refresh the parched Earth, and assist her Fruits: And also to serve for the Commerce of one Nation with another by Navigation. God in his wisdom and goodness walks upon the wings of the Wind, Psal. 104. 3.

† Lessus.

|| Rivers are appointed to bathe the Ground, and render it fresh and lively; they fortifie Cities, are the limits of Countreys, serve for Commerce; they are the Watring-pots of the Earth, and the Vessels for Drink for the living Creatures that dwell upon the Earth. God cut those Channells for the wild Asses, the Beasts of the Desert, which are his Creatures as well as the rest, Psal. 104. 10, 12, 13.

|| Daille melan.  
part. 2. p. 472,  
473.



*Trees* are appointed for the Habitations of Birds, Shadows for the Earth, Nourishment for the Creatures, Materials for Building, and Fuel for the relief of man against Cold.

The *Seasons* of the Year have their use; the Winter makes the Juice retire into the Earth, fortifies Plants, and fixes their Roots: It moistens the Earth that was dried before by the heat of Summer, and cleanseth and prepares it for a new fruitfulness. The Spring calls out the Sap in new Leaves and Fruit: The Summer consumes the superfluous moisture, and produceth Nourishment for the Inhabitants of the World.

\* Daille me-  
lang. part. 1.  
p. 477, &c.

\* The *Day* and *Night* have also their usefulness: The Day gives Life to Labour, and is a guide to Motion and Action. *Psalm*. 104. 23. *The Sun ariseth, and goeth forth to his labour until the Evening.* It warms the Air, and quickens Nature; without Day the World would be a *Chaos*, an unseen Beauty. The Night indeed casts a Vail upon the bravery of the Earth, but it draws the Curtains from that of Heaven; though it darkens below, it makes us see the Beauty of the World above, and discovers to us a glorious part of the Creation of God, the Tapestry of Heaven, and the Motion of the Stars, hid from us by the eminent light of the Day. It procures a Truce from Labour, and refresheth the Bodies of Creatures, by recruiting the Spirits which are scattered by watching. It prevents the ruin of Life, by a reparation of what was wasted in the Day. It takes from us the sight of Flowers and Plants, but it washeth their Face with Dews for a new Appearance next Morning. The length of the Day and Night, is not without a Mark of Wisdom; were they of a greater length, as the length of a Week or Month, the one would too much dry, and the other too much moisten; and for want of Action, the Members would be stupified. The perpetual Succession of Day and Night, is an Evidence of the Divine Wisdom, in tempering the travel and rest of Creatures. Hence the *Psalmist* tells us, *Psalm*. 74. 16, 17. *The day is thine, and the night is thine; thou hast prepared the light of the Sun, and made Summer and Winter; i.e. they are of God's framing, not without a wise counsel and end.*

Hence let us ascend to the *Bodies* of living Creatures, and we shall find every Member fitted for use. What a Curiosity is there in every Member? Every one fitted to a particular use in their situation, form, temper, and mutual agreement for the good of the whole: The Eye to direct, the Ear to receive Directions from others, the Hands to act, the Feet to move. Every Creature hath Members fitted for that Element wherein it resides: And in the Body, some parts are appointed to change the Food into Blood, others to refine it, and others to distribute and convey it to several parts for the maintenance of the whole: The Heart to mint vital Spirits for preserving Life, and the Brain to coin Animal Spirits for Life and Motion; the Lungs to serve for the cooling the Heart, which else would be parcht as the ground in Summer. The Motion of the Members of the Body by one act of the Will, and also without the Will by a natural Instinct, is an admirable Evidence of Divine Skill in the Structure of the Body; so that well might the *Psalmist* cry out, *Psalm*. 139. 14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*

But how much more of this Divine Perfection is seen in the *Soul*? A Nature furnished with a Faculty of Understanding to judge of things, to gather in things that are distant, and to reason and draw Conclusions from one thing to another, with a Memory to treasure up things that are past, with a Will to apply it self so readily to what the Mind judges fit and comely, and fly so speedily from what it judges ill and hurtful. The whole World is a Stage, every Creature in it hath a part to act, and a Nature suited to that part and end 'tis design'd for; and all concur in a joint Language to publish the Glory of Divine Wisdom, they have a Voice to proclaim the *Glory of God*, *Psalm*. 19. 1, 3. And it is not the least part of God's Skill, in framing the Creatures so, that upon Man's Obedience, they are the Channels of his Goodness; and upon Man's Disobedience, they can in their Natures be the Ministers of his Justice for the punishing of offending Creatures.



4. Fourthly, This Wisdom is apparent in the linking all these useful parts together, so that one is subordinate to the other for a common end. All parts are exactly fitted to one another, and every part to the whole, though they are of different Natures, as Lines distant in themselves, yet they meet in one common Center, the good and the preservation of the Universe; they are all joyned together, as the word translated *framed* \* signifies; knit by fit Bands and Ligaments to contribute mutual Beauty, Strength and Assistance to one another; like so many Links of a Chain coupled together, that though there be a distance in place, there is a unity in regard of connexion and end, there is a consent in the whole. *Hosea 2. 21, 22. The Heavens bear the Earth, and the Earth bears the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oyl.* The Heavens communicate their qualities to the Earth, and the Earth conveys them to the Fruits she bears: † The Air distributes Light, † *Dalle 15. Somp. 17.* Wind and Rain to the Earth; the Earth and the Sea render to the Air Exhalations and Vapours, and all together charitably give to the Plants and Animals that which is necessary for their nourishment and refreshment. The Influences of the Heavens animate the Earth, and the Earth affords matter in part for the Influences it receives from the Regions above. Living Creatures are maintain'd by Nourishment; Nourishment is conveyed to them by the Fruits of the Earth; the Fruits of the Earth are produced by means of Rain and Heat; Matter for Rain and Dew is raised by the heat of the Sun; and the Sun by its motion distributes heat and quickning vertue to all parts of the Earth. So Colours are made for the pleasure of the Eye, Sounds for the delight of the Ear: Light is formed, whereby the Eye may see the one, and Air to convey the Species of Colours to the Eye, and Sound to the Ear; all things are like the Wheels of a Watch compacted: And though many of the Creatures be endowed with contrary qualities, yet they are joyned in a Marriage-knot for the Publick Security, and Subserviency to the Preservation and Order of the Universe: As the variety of Strings upon an Instrument, sending forth various and distinct sounds, are temper'd together, for the framing excellent and delightful Aires. In this universal conspiring of the Creatures together to one end, is the wisdom of the Creator apparent; in tuning so many Contraries as the Elements are, and preserving them in their Order, which if once broken, the whole Frame of Nature would crack, and fall in pieces; all are so interwoven and inlaid together, by the Divine Workmanship, as to make up one intire Beauty in the whole Fabrick: As every part in the Body of Man hath a distinct Comeliness, yet there is besides, the Beauty of the whole, that results from the union of divers parts exactly fashion'd to one another, and linkt together.

By the way,

Use. *How much may we see of the Perfection of God in every thing that presents it self to our eyes? And how should we be convinc'd of our unworthy neglect of ascending to him with reverent and admiring thoughts, upon the prospect of the Creatures? What dull Scholars are we, when every Creature is our Teacher, every part of the Creature a lively Instruction! Those things that we tread under our feet, if used by us according to the full design of their Creation, would afford rich matter, not only for our heads, but our hearts. As Grace doth not destroy Nature, but elevate it, so neither should the fresher and fuller discoveries of Divine Wisdom in Redemption, deface all our thoughts of his Wisdom in Creation. Though the greater Light of the Sun, obscures the lesser sparkling of the Stars, yet it gives way in the Night to the discovery of them, that God may be seen, known, and considered in all his Works of Wonder, and Miracles of Nature. No part of Scripture is more spiritual than the *Psalms*; none filled with clearer Discoveries of *Christ* in the Old Testament; yet how often do the Penmen consider the Creation of God, and find their *Meditations on him to be sweet*, as consider'd in his Works? *Psalm 104. 34. My meditation of him shall be sweet.* When? why, after a short History of the Goodness and Wisdom of God in the Frame of the World, and the Species of the Creatures.*



2. The wisdom of God appears in his Government of his Creatures. The regular motion of the Creatures speaks for this Perfection, as well as the exact Composition of them. If the exquisiteness of the Frame conducts us to the skill of the Contriver; the exactness of their Order, according to his Will and Law, speaks no less the wisdom of the Governour. It cannot be thought that a rash and irrational Power presides over a World so well disposed: The disposition of things hath no less characters of Skill, than the Creation of them. No man can hear an excellent Lesson upon a *Lute*, but must presently reflect upon the Art of the Person that touches it. The Prudence of man appears in wrapping up the Concerns of a Kingdom in his mind, for the well-ordering of it; and shall not the wisdom of God shine forth, as he is the Director of the World?

I shall omit his Government of *Inanimate* Creatures, and confine the Discourse to his Government of *Man*, as *Rational*, as *Sinful*, as *Restor'd*.

1. In his Government of man as a Rational Creature.

1. In the Law he gives to man. Wisdom framed it, though Will enacted it. The will of God is the Rule of Righteousness to us, but the wisdom of God is the Foundation of that Rule of Righteousness which he prescribes us. \* The Composition of a *Musician* is the Rule of singing to his Scholars; yet the Consent and Harmony in that Composition, derives not it self from his will, but from his understanding; he would not be a *Musician*, if his Compositions were contrary to the Rules of true Harmony: So the Laws of men are compos'd by wisdom, though they are enforc'd by will and authority.

The *Moral* Law, which was the Law of Nature, the Law imprinted upon *Adam*, is so framed, as to secure the Rights of God as Supream, and the Rights of Men in their distinctions of Superiority and Equality: 'Tis therefore called *holy and good*, *Rom. 7. 12. holy*, as it prescribes our duty to God in his worship; *good*, as it regulates the offices of human life, and preserves the common interest of Mankind.

1. 'Tis suited to the Nature of Man. As God hath given a Law of Nature, a fixed Order to *Inanimate* Creatures, so he hath given a Law of Reason to Rational Creatures: Other Creatures are not capable of a Law differing good and evil, because they are destitute of Faculties and Capacities to make distinction between them. It had not been agreeable to the wisdom of God to propose any Moral Law to them, who had neither understanding to discern, nor will to chuse. 'Tis therefore to be observed, that whilst *Christ* exhorted others to the embracing his Doctrine, yet he exhorted not little Children, though he took them in his Arms, because though they had Faculties, yet they were not come to such a Maturity, as to be capable of a Rational Instruction. But there was a necessity for some Command for the government of man; since God had made him a Rational Creature, it was not agreeable to his wisdom to govern him as a Brute, but as a Rational Creature, capable of knowing his Precepts, and voluntarily walking in them; and without a Law, he had not been capable of any exercise of his Reason in Services respecting God.

He therefore gives him a Law with a Covenant annex to it, whereby man is obliged to Obedience, and secured of a Reward. This was enforced with severe Penalties, *Death*, with all the Horrors attending it, to deter him from Transgression, *Gen. 2. 17.* wherein is implied a Promise of continuance of Life, and all its Felicities, to allure him to a mindfulness of his Obligation. So perfect a Hedge did Divine Wisdom set about him, to keep him within the bounds of that Obedience, which was both his Debt and Security, that wheresoever he looked, he saw either something to invite him, or something to drive him to the payment of his Duty, and perseverance in it. Thus the Law was exactly framed to the Nature of man; man had twisted in him a desire of Happiness; the Promise was suited to cherish this natural Desire. He had also the Passion of Fear; the proper Object of this



this was any thing destructive to his Being, Nature, and Felicity; this the threatening met with. In the whole it was accommodated to man as rational: Precepts to the Law in his mind, Promises to the natural Appetite, Threatnings to the most prevailing Affection, and to the implanted Desires of preserving both his Being and Happiness in that Being. These were rational Motives, fitted to the nature of *Adam*, which was above the life God had given Plants, and the sense he had given Animals.

The Command given man in Innocence, was suited to his strength and power; God gave him not any Command, but what he had ability to observe: and Since we want not power to forbear an Apple in our corrupted and impotent State, he wanted not strength in his state of Integrity. The Wisdom of God Commanded nothing, but what was very easy to be observed by him, and inferior to his natural Ability. It had been both unjust and unwise to have commanded him to fly up to the Sun, when he had not Wings; or stop the Course of the Sea, when he had not strength.

2. *It is suited to the happiness and benefit of man.* God's Laws are not an act of meer Authority respecting his own Glory, but of wisdom and goodness respecting mans Benefit. They are perfective of mans Nature, conferring a Wisdom upon him, *rejoycing his Heart, enlightning his eyes*, *Psal. 19. 7, 8.* affording him both a knowledge of God, and of himself. To be without a Law, is for man to be as Beasts, without Justice and without Religion: Other things are for the good of the Body, but the Laws of God for the good of the Soul; the more perfect the Law, the greater the benefit. The Laws given to the *Jews* were the honour and excellency of that Nation; *Deut. 1. 8. What Nation is there so great, that hath statutes and Judgments so righteous?* They were made States-men in the *Judicial Law*, Ecclesiasticks in the *Ceremonial*, honest men in the *Second Table*, and Divine in the *First*. All his Laws are suited to the true satisfaction of man, and the good of Human Society. Had God framed a Law only for one Nation, there would have been the Characters of a particular Wisdom; but now an universal wisdom appears, in accommodating his Law, not only to this or that particular Society or Corporation of man, but to the benefit of all mankind in the variety of Climates, and Countries wherein they live: Every thing that is disturbing to Human Society is provided against; nothing is enjoin'd, but what is sweet, rational and useful: It orders us not to attempt any thing against the life of our Neighbour, the honour of his Bed, propriety in his Goods, and the clearness of his Reputation; and if well observed, would alter the face of the World, and make it look with another hue. The World would be alter'd from a brutish to a human World: It would change Lions and Wolves, men of Lion-like and Wolvish disposition, into reason and sweetness. And because the whole Law is sum'd up in *love*, it obligeth us to endeavour the preservation of one anothers Beings, the favouring of one anothers Interests, and increasing the Goods, as much as Justice will permit, and keeping up one anothers Credits; because love, which is the Soul of the Law, is not shewn by a cessation from action, but signifies an ardor upon all occasions in doing good. I say were this Law well observed, the World would be another thing than it is. It would become a Religious Fraternity, the Voice of Enmity and the Noise of Groans and Cursings would not be heard in our Streets: Peace would be in all Borders; plenty of Charity in the midst of Cities and Countries; Joy and singing would sound in all habitations. Mans advantage was design'd in Gods Laws, and doth naturally result from the observance of them. God so ordered them by his Wisdom, that the obedience of man should draw forth his Goodness, and prevent those smarting Judgments, which were necessary to reduce the Creature to order; that would not voluntarily continue in the order God had appointed. The Laws of men are often unjust, oppressive, cruel; sometimes against the Law of nature: But an universal wisdom and righteousness glitters in the Divine Law. There is nothing in it, but what is worthy of God, and useful for the Creature; so that we may well say with *Job, Who teaches like God, Job. 36. 22.* or as some render it, *who is a law-giver like God? Who can say to him, thou hast wrought iniquity or folly among men?* His Precepts were framed for the preservation



tion of man in that rectitude wherein he was Created, in that likeness to God wherein he was first made, that there might be a correspondence between the Integrity of the Creature and the Goodness of his Creator, by the Obedience of man; that man might exercise his Faculties in Operations worthy of him, and beneficial to the World.

3. The Wisdom of God is seen in *insuting his Laws to the Consciences, as well as the Interest of all Mankind.* Rom. 2. 14. *The Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the Law;* so great an affinity there is between the wise Law and the Reason of man.

There is a natural Beauty emerging from them, and darting upon the Reasons, and Consciences of men, which dictates to them that this Law is worthy to be observed in it self. The two main Principles of the Law, the Love and worship of God, and doing as we would be done by, have an indelible impression in the Consciences of all men in regard of the Principle, though they are not suitably exprest in the Practice. Were there no Law outwardly published, yet every mans Conscience would dictate to him, that God was to be acknowledged, worshipped, loved, as naturally as his Reason would acquaint him that there was such a Being as God. This suitability of them to the Consciences of men, is manifest, in that the Laws of the best governed Nations among the Heathen have had an agreement with them. Nothing can be more exactly composed, according to the Rules of right and exact Reason than this; no man but approves of something in it, yea of the whole when he exerciseth that dimm Reason which he hath. Suppose any man, (not an absolute Atheist) he cannot but acknowledge the reasonableness of worshipping God. Grant him to be a Spirit, and it will presently appear absurd to represent him by any Corporeal Image, and derogate from his Excellency by so mean a resemblance; with the same easiness he will grant a reverence due to the Name of God; that we must not serve our turn of him, by calling him to witness to a lye in a solemn Oath. That as Worship is due to him, so that some stated time is a circumstance necessary to the performance of that Worship. And as to the *Second Table*, will any man in his right reason quarrel with that Command that engageth his Inferiors to honour him; that secures his Being from a violent murder, and his goods from unjust rapine? and though by the fury of his Lusts he break the Laws of Wedlock himself, yet he cannot but approve of that Law, as it prohibits every man from doing him the like injury and disgrace. The suitability of the Law to the Consciences of men, is further evidenced by those furious reflections and strong alarms of Conscience upon a transgression of it, and that in all parts of the World, more or less in all men: So exactly hath Divine wisdom fitted the Law to the Reason and Consciences of men, as one Tally to another. Indeed, without such an agreement, no mans Conscience could have any ground for a *Hue and Cry*, nor need any man be startled with the Records of it. This manifests the wisdom of God in framing his Law so, that the Reasons and consciences of all men do one time or other subscribe to it. What Governour in the World is able to make any Law distinct from this revealed by God, that shall reach all places, all persons, all Hearts?

We may add to this the extent of his Commands in ordering goodness at the root, not only in action but affection; not only in the motion of the Members, but the disposition of the Soul; which *insuting* a Law to the inward frame of man, is quite out of the compass of the wisdom of any Creature.

4. His Wisdom is seen in the *incouragements he gives for the studying and observing his will, Psal. 119. 11. In keeping thy Commandments there is great reward.* The variety of them; there is not any particular *Genius* in man, but may find something suitable to win upon him in the revealed will of God. There is a strain of Reason to satisfy the Rational; of Eloquence, to gratify the the Fanciful; of Interest to allure the Selfish; of Terror, to startle the Obstinate. As a skillful Angler stores himself with Baits, according to the Appetites of the sorts of fish he intends to catch; so in the Word of God, there are varieties of Baits, according to the varieties of the



the Inclinations of men; Threatnings to work upon Fear; Promises to work upon Love; Examples of holy men set out for Imitation; and those plainly, neither his Threatnings nor his Promises are dark as the *Heathen* Oracles; but peremptory, as becomes a Sovereign Law-giver; and plain, as was necessary for the understanding of a Creature: As he deals graciously with men in exhorting and encouraging them; so he deals wisely herein, by taking away all Excuse from them if they ruine the interest of their Souls by denying Obedience to their Sovereign.

Again, the Rewards God proposeth are accommodated, not to the Brutish parts of man, his Carnal Sense and Fleshly Appetite; but to the Capacity of a Spiritual Soul, which admits only of Spiritual Gratifications; and cannot in its own Nature, without a sordid subjection to the Humors of the Body, be moved by Sensual Proposals. God backs his Precepts with that which the Nature of Man longed for, and with Spiritual Delights, which can only satisfy a rational Appetite: And thereby did as well gratifie the noblest Desires in man, as Oblige him to the noblest Service and Work\*. Indeed Verue and Holiness being perfectly amiable, ought chiefly to affect our Understandings, and by them draw our Wills to the esteem and pursuit of them. But since the desire of Happiness is inseparable from the Nature of Man, as impossible to be dis-join'd, as an Inclination to descend to be severed from heavy Bodies, or an instinct to ascend from Light and A ry of Substances; God serves himself of the Inclination of our Natures to happiness, to engender in us an esteem and affection to the Holiness he doth require. He proposeth the enjoyment of a supernatural Good and everlasting Glory, as a Bait to that insatiable longing our Natures have for Happiness, to receive the impression of Holiness into our Souls. And besides, he doth proportion Rewards according to the degrees of mens Industry, Labour, and Zeal for him; and weighs out a Recompence, not only suited to, but above the service. He that improves *five Talents*, is to be ruler over *five Cities*; that is, a greater proportion of Honour and Glory than another, *Luke 19. 17. 18.* As a wise Father excites the affection of his Children to things worthy of Praise, by varieties of Recompences according to their several Actions. And it was the Wisdom of the *Steward*, in the Judgment of our *Saviour*, to give every one the *portion that belonged to him*, *Luke 12. 42.* There is no part of the Word wherein we meet not with the will and Wisdom of God, varieties of Duties, and varieties of Encouragement mingled together.

5. The Wisdom of God is seen *In fitting the Revelations of his will to after-times, and for the preventing of the foreseen Corruptions of men.* The whole Revelation of the mind of God is stored with Wisdom in the words, connexion, sence; It looks backwards to past, and forwards to Ages to come: A hidden wisdom lies in the bowels of it, like Gold in a Mine.

The Old testament was so composed, as to fortify the New, when God should bring it to light. The Foundations of the Gospel were laid in the Law: The Predictions of the *Prophets*, and figures of the Law were so wisely framed and laid down in such clear expressions, as to be Proofs of the Authority of the New Testament, and Convictions of Jesus his being the *Messiah*, *Luke 24. 14.* Things concerning Christ, were written in *Moses*, the *Prophets*, and *Psalms*, and do to this day stare the *Jews* so in the face, that they are fain to invent absurd and Nonsensical Interpretations to excuse their Unbelief, and continue themselves in their obstinate Blindness. And in pursuance of the efficacy of those Predictions, it was a part of the Wisdom of God to bring forth the *Translation* of the Old Testament, (by the means *Ptolomy* King of *Egypt* some hundreds of years before the coming of Christ) into the *Greek* Language, the Tongue then most known in the World; And why? to prepare the *Gentiles* by the reading of it, for that gracious call he intended them, and for the entertainment of the Gospel, which some few years after was to be publisht among them; that by reading the Predictions so long before made, they might more readily receive the accomplishment of them in their due time.

The



The Scripture is written in such a manner, as to obviate Errors foreseen by God to enter into the Church. It may be wondred, why the *Universal* Particle should be inserted by Christ, in the giving the *Cup* in the Supper, which was not in the distributing the *Bread*, *Mat. 26, 27. Drink ye all of it*; Not at the distributing the *Bread*, *Eat you all of it*: And *Mark* in his Relation tells us, *They all drank of it*, *Mark 11. 23*. The Church of *Rome* hath been the occasion of discovering to us the Wisdom of our Saviour in inserting that Particle *all*, since they were so bold to exclude the Communicants from the Cup by a trick of Concomitancy. Christ foresaw the Error, and therefore put in a little word to obviate a great Invasion: And the spirit of God hath particularly left upon record, that *Particle*, as we may reasonably suppose to such a purpose. And so in the description of the *blessed Virgin*, *Luke 1. 27*. There is nothing of her Holiness mentioned, which is with much diligence recorded of *Elizabeth*; *Vers. 6. Righteous, walking in all the commandments of God blameless*; Probably to prevent the superstition which God foresaw would arise in the World. And we do not find more undervaluing speeches, uttered by Christ to any of his Disciples in the exercise of his Office, than to her, except to *Peter*. As when she acquainted him with the want of Wine at the Marriage in *Cana*, she receives a slighting answer; *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* *John. 2. 4*. And when one was admiring the *blessedness* of her that bare him, he turns the Discourse another way, to pronounce a *blessedness* rather belonging to them that *hear the Word of God and keep it*, *Luke 11. 27, 28*. in a mighty Wisdom to Antidote his people against any conceit of the prevalency of the Virgin over him in Heaven, in the Exercise of his Mediatory Office.

2. As his Wisdom appears in his Government by his Laws, so it appears in the various inclinations and conditions of Men. As there is a distinction of several Creatures, and several qualities in them, for the Common good of the World; so among men there are several inclinations and several Abilities, as Donatives from God, for the Common advantage of Human Society; As several Channels cut out from the same River run several waies, and refresh several Soils; one Man is qualified for one Employment, another marked out by God for a different Work, yet all of them fruitful to bring in a Revenue of Glory to God, and a harvest of Profit to the rest of Mankind. How unusefull would the Body be, if it had but one Member? *1 Cor. 12. 19*. How unprovided would a House be, if it had not Vessels of Dishonour as well as of Honour? The Corporation of Mankind would be as much a *Chaos*, as the Matter of the Heavens and the Earth was, before it was distinguished by several forms breathed into it at the Creation. Some are inspired with a particular *Genius* for one Art, some for another: Every man hath a distinct Talent. If all were Husband-men, where would be the Instruments to Plow and Reap? If all were Artificers, where would they have Corn to nourish themselves? All men are like Vessels, and Parts in the Body, design'd for distinct Offices and Functions for the good of the whole, and mutually return an advantage to one another.

As the variety of Gifts in the Church is a fruit of the Wisdom of God, for the preservation and increase of the Church, so the variety of Inclinations and Employments in the World is a fruit of the Wisdom of God, for the preservation and subsistence of the World by mutual Commerce, What the *Apostle* largely discourseth of the former, in *1 Cor. 12*. may be applied to the other.

The various Conditions of men is also a fruit of Divine Wisdom. Some are Rich, and some Poor; the Rich have as much need of the Poor, as the Poor have of the Rich: If the Poor depend upon the Rich for their livelyhood, the Rich depend upon the Poor for their Conveniencies. Many Arts would not be learn'd by men, if Poverty did not oblige them to it; and many would faint in the learning of them, if they were not thereunto encouraged by the Rich.



## Wisdom of God.

The Poor labour for the Rich, as the Earth sends Vapours into the vaster and fuller Air; and the Rich return advantages again to the Poor, as the Clouds do the Vapours in Rain upon the Earth. As Meat would not afford a nourishing Juice without Bread, and Bread without other Food would immoderately fill the Stomach, and not be well digested; so the Rich would be unprofitable in the Commonwealth without the Poor, and the Poor would be burthensom to a Commonwealth without the Rich: The Poor could not be easily govern'd without the Rich, nor the Rich sufficiently and conveniently provided for without the Poor. If all were Rich, there would be no Objects for the exercise of a Noble part of Charity: If all were Poor, there were no Matter for the exercise of it. Thus the Divine Wisdom planted various Inclinations, and diversified the Conditions of Men for the publick advantages of the World.

2. Gods Wisdom appears, in the government of Men, as Fallen and Sinful; or in the government of Sin. After the Law of God was broke, and Sin invaded and conquer'd the World; Divine Wisdom had another Scene to act in, and other Methods of Government were necessary. The Wisdom of God is then seen in ordering those Jarring Discords, drawing Good out of Evil, and Honour to himself out of that, which in its own Nature tended to the supplanting of his Glory. God being a Sovereign Good, would not suffer so great an Evil to enter, but to turn himself out of it for some greater End; for all his Thoughts are full of Goodness and Wisdom.

Now though the Permission of Sin be an Act of his Sovereignty, and the Punishment of Sin be an Act of his Justice; yet the Ordination of Sin to good, is an Act of his Wisdom, whereby he doth dispose the Evil, over-rules the Malice, and orders the Events of it to his own Purposes. Sin in it self is a Disorder, and therefore God doth not permit Sin for it self; for in its own Nature it hath nothing of Amiability; but he wills it for some Righteous End, which belongs to the manifestation of his Glory, which is his aim in all the Acts of his Will: He wills it not as Sin, but as his Wisdom can order it to some greater Good than was before in the World, and make it contribute to the beauty of the Order he intends. As a dark Shadow is not delightful and pleasant in it self, nor is Drawn by a Painter for any Amiability there is in the Shadow it self, but as it serves to set forth that Beauty, which is the main design of his Art; so the glorious Effects which arise from the Entrance of Sin into the World, are not from the Creatures Evil, but the Depths of Divine Wisdom.

Particularly,

1. Gods Wisdom is seen in the bounding of Sin. As it is said of the Wrath of Man, it shall praise him, and the remainder of Wrath God doth restrain, Psal. 76. 10. He sets limits to the boiling Corruption of the Heart, as he doth to the boisterous Waves of the Sea, *Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further.* As God is the Rector of the World, he doth so restrain Sin, so temper and direct it, as that Human Society is preserved, which else would be overflown with a Deluge of Wickedness, and Ruine would be brought upon all Communities. The World would be a Shambles, a Brothel-house, if God by his Wisdom and Goodness, did not set bars to that Wickedness which is in the Hearts of Men: The whole Earth would be as bad as Hell. Since the Heart of Man is a Hell of Corruption, by that, the Souls of all Men would be excited to the acting the worst Villanies; since *every thought of the heart of Man is only evil, and that continually*, Gen. 6. 5. if the Wisdom of God did not stop these Flood-gates of Evil in the Hearts of Men, it would overflow the World, and frustrate all the Gracious Designs he carries on among the Sons of Men. Were it not for this Wisdom, every House would be filled with Violence, as well as every Nature is with Sin. What harm would not strong and furious Beasts do, did not the Skill of Man tame and bridle them? How often hath Divine Wisdom restrained the Viciousness of Human Nature, and let it run, not to that point they would, but to the end he purposed? *Labans* Fury, and *Esaus* Enmity against Jacob were pent in within bounds for *Jacobs* safety, and their Hearts over-ruled to the intended destruction of the good Man to a perfect Amity.

\* Gen. 31. 26.  
& Gen. 32.



II. Gods *Wisdom* is seen, in the bringing glory to himself out of Sin.

1. *Out of Sin it self.* God erects the Trophies of Honour upon that, which is a Natural means to hinder and deface it. His glorious Attributes are drawn out to our view, upon the occasion of Sin, which otherwise had lain hid in his own Being. Sin is altogether black and abominable; but by the Admirable *Wisdom* of God, he hath drawn out of the dreadful darkness of Sin, the saving Beams of his Mercy, and displayed his Grace in the *Incarnation* and *Passion* of his Son for the Atonement of Sin. Thus he permitted *Adams* Fall, and wisely order'd it, for a fuller discovery of his own Nature, and a higher elevation of Mans good, that *as Sin reigned to death, so might Grace reign through Righteousness to Eternal life, by Jesus Christ, Rom. 5. 21.* The unbounded Goodness of God could not have appeared without it. His Goodness in rewarding Innocent Obedience, would have been manifested; but not his Mercy, in pardoning Rebellious Crimes: An Innocent Creature is the Object of the Rewards of Grace, as the standing Angels are under the Beams of Grace; but not under the Beams of Mercy, because they were never Sinful, and consequently never Miserable. Without Sin the Creature had not been Miserable: Had Man remained Innocent, he had not been the Subject of Punishment; and without the Creatures Misery, Gods Mercy in sending his Son to save his Enemies, could not have appeared. The abundance of Sin is a Passive occasion for God to manifest the Abundance of his Grace:

The Power of God in the changing the Heart of a Rebellious Creature, had not appeared, had not Sin infected our Nature. We had not clearly known the Vindictive Justice of God, had no Crime been committed; for that is the proper Object of Divine Wrath. The Goodness of God could never have permitted Justice to exercise it self upon an Innocent Creature, that was not guilty either Personally, or by Imputation. *Psal. 11. 7. The righteous Lord loveth Righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright.* Wisdom is illustrious hereby. God suffered Man to fall into a Mortal Disease, to shew the virtue of his own Restoratives to cure Sin, which in it self is Incurable by the Art of any Creature. And otherwise this Perfection whereby God draws Good out of Evil, had been utterly useless, and would have been destitute of an Object wherein to discover it self.

Again, *Wisdom* in ordering a Rebellious head-strong World to its own ends, is greater than the ordering an Innocent World, exactly observant of his Precepts, and complying with the End of the Creation. Now, without the entrance of Sin, this *Wisdom* had wanted a Stage to act upon. Thus God raised the Honour of his *Wisdom*, while Man ruin'd the Integrity of his Nature; and made use of the Creatures breach of his Divine Law, to establish the Honour of it in a more signal and stable manner, by the Active and Passive Obedience of the Son of his Bosom. Nothing serves God so much, as an occasion of glorifying himself, as the entrance of Sin into the World; by this occasion God communicates to us the knowledge of those Perfections of his Nature, which had else been folded up from us in an Eternal Night; his Justice had lain in the dark, as having nothing to punish; his Mercy had been obscure, as having none to pardon; a great part of his Wisdom had been silent, as having no such Object to order.

2. His *Wisdom* appears, In making use of sinful Instruments. He uses the Malice and Enmity of the Devil to bring about his own Purposes, and makes the sworn Enemy of his Honour contribute to the Illustrating of it against his will. This great Crafts-Master he took in his own Net, and defeated the Devil by the Devils Malice; by turning the Contrivances he had hatch'd and accomplish'd against Man, against himself. He used him as a Tempter, to grapple with our Saviour in the Wilderness, whereby to make him fit to succour us; and as the God of this World, to inspire the wicked Jews to Crucifie him, whereby to render him actually the Redeemer of the World, and so made him an Ignorant Instrument of that Divine Glory he design'd to ruine.



\* 'Tis more Skill to make a curious piece of Workmanship with Ill condition'd Tools, than with Instruments naturally fitted for the work: 'Tis no such great wonder for a Linnen to draw an exact piece with a fit Pencil and futable Colours, as to begin and perfect a beautiful work with a Straw and Water, things improper for such a design. This *Wisdom* of God is more admirable and astonishing than if a Man were able to rear a vast Palace by Fire, whose nature is to consume Combustible matter, not to erect a Building.

To make things serviceable contrary to their own Nature, is a *Wisdom* peculiar to the Creator of Nature. Gods making use of *Devils*, for the glory of his Name, and the good of his People, is a more amazing piece of Wisdom, than his Goodness in employing the Blessed Angels in his work. To promise, that the *World*, (which includes the *God* of the *World*) and *Death*, and *Things present*, let them be as Evil as they will, should be *ours*, that is, for our good, and for his glory, is an act of Goodness; but to make them serviceable to the Honour of *Christ*, and the good of his People, is a Wisdom that may well raise our highest Admirations: They are for Believers, as they are for the *glory of Christ*, and as *Christ is for the glory of God*.

To Chain up *Satan* wholly, and frustrate his Wiles, would be an Argument of Divine Goodness; but to suffer him to run his risque, and then improve all his Contrivances for his own glorious and gracious Ends and Purposes, manifests besides his Power and Goodness, his *Wisdom* also. He uses the Sins of Evil Instruments for the *glory of his Justice*, *Isa. 10. 5, 6, 7*. Thus he served himself of the Ambition and Covetousness of the *Assyrians*, *Chaldeans*, and *Romans*, for the Correction of his People and Punishment of his Rebels. Just as the *Roman* Magistrates used the fury of *Lions* and other wild Beasts, in their *Theatres*, for the Punishment of Criminals: The *Lions* acted their Natural temper in tearing those that were expos'd to them for a Prey; but the intent of the Magistrates was to punish their Crimes. The Magistrate inspir'd not the *Lions* with their Rage, that they had from their Natures; but served themselves of that Natural Rage, to execute Justice.

3. Gods *Wisdom* is seen in bringing good to the Creature out of Sin. He hath ordered Sin to such an end as Man never dreamt of, the Devil never imagin'd, and Sin in its own Nature could never attain. Sin in its own Nature tends to no good, but that of Punishment, whereby the Creature is brought into order. It hath no relation to the Creatures good in it self, but to the Creatures mischief: But God, by an act of Infinite Wisdom brings good out of it to the Creature, as well as glory to his Name, contrary to the Nature of the Crime, the Intention of the Criminal, and the Design of the Tempter.

God willed Sin, that is, he willed to permit it, that he might communicate himself to the Creature in the most excellent manner. He willed the Permission of Sin, as an occasion to bring forth the Mystery of the *Incarnation* and *Passion* of our Saviour; as he permitted the Sin of *Josephs* Brethren that he might use their Evil to a good end. He never, because of his Holiness, wills Sin as an End; but in regard of his Wisdom he wills to permit it as a Means and Occasion: And thus, to draw good out of those things which are in their own Nature most contrary to Good, is the highest pitch of Wisdom.

1. The Redemption of Man in so excellent a way, was drawn from the occasion of Sin. The greatest Blessing that ever the World was blest with, was usher'd in by Contrarieties, by the Lust and irregular Affection of Man; the first Promise of the Redeemer by the Fall of *Adam* *Gen. 3. 15*. and the bruising the heel of that Promised Seed, by the blackest Tragedy acted by wicked Rebels, the Treachery of *Judas* and the Rage of the *Jews*; the highest Good hath been brought forth by the greatest Wickedness. As God out of the *Chaos* of rude and indigested Matter framed the first Creation; so from the Sins of Men, and Malice of *Satan*, he hath erected the Everlasting Scheme of Honour in a New Creation of all things by *Jesus Christ*.



The *Devil* inspir'd Man, to content his own fury in the Death of Christ; and God order'd it to accomplish his own design of Redemption in the Passion of the Redeemer: The Devil had his Diabolical Ends, and God over-powers his Action to serve his own Divine ends. The Person that betrayed him, was admitted to be a Spectator of the most private Actions of our Saviour, that his Innocence might be justified; to shew, that he was not afraid to have his Enemies Judges of his most retir'd Privacies. While they all thought to do their own Wills, Divine Wisdom orders them to do Gods Will. *Acts 2.23. Him being delivered by the determinate Counsel and Fore-knowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have Crucified and slain.* And wherein the Crucifiers of Christ sinned, in shedding the richest Blood, upon their Repentance they found the expiation of their Crimes, and the discovery of a superabundant Mercy. Nothing but Blood was aimed at by them: The best Blood was shed by them; but Infinite Wisdom makes the *Cross* the Scene of his own Righteousness, and the Womb of Mans Recovery.

By the occasion of Mans Lapsed state, there was a way open to raise Man to a more excellent Condition, than that whereinto he was put by Creation: And the depriving Man of the happiness of an Earthly *Paradise*, in a way of Justice, was an occasion of advancing him to a Heavenly Felicity, in a way of Grace. The Violation of the Old Covenant, occasion'd a better: The loss of the first Integrity, usher'd in a more stable Righteousness, an *Everlasting Righteousness*, *Dan. 9. 24.* And the falling of the First Head, was succeeded by one whose standing could not but be Eternal.

The Fall of the *Devil* was ordered by Infinite Wisdom, for the good of that Body from which he fell. 'Tis supposed by some, that the *Devil* was the Chief Angel in Heaven, the Head of all the rest; and that he Falling, the Angels were left as a Body without a Head; and after he had Politically beheaded the Angels, he endeavoured to destroy Man, and rout him out of *Paradise*: But God takes the opportunity to set up his Son, as the Head of Angels and Men. And thus whilst the Devil endeavoured to spoil the Corporation of Angels, and make them a Body contrary to God, God makes Angels and Men one Body under one Head, for his Service.

The Angels in losing a defectible Head, attained a more excellent and glorious Head in another Nature, which they had not before; though of a Lower Nature in his Humanity, yet of a more glorious Nature in his Divinity: From whence many suppose they derive their Confirming Grace, and the stability of their standing. *All things in Heaven and Earth are gathered together in Christ, Eph. 1. 10. ἀνακαταλαμβάνοντες*, All united in him, and reduced under one Head: That though our Saviour be not properly their Redeemer, for Redemption supposeth Captivity, yet in some sense he is their Head and Mediator; so that now the Inhabitants of Heaven and Earth are but one Family, *Ephes. 3. 15.* And the Innumerable Company of Angels are parts of that Heavenly and Triumphant Jerusalem, and that General Assembly, whereof Jesus Christ is Mediator, *Heb. 12. 22, 29.*

2. The Good of a Nation often, by the skill of Divine Wisdom, is promoted by the Sins of some Men. The Patriarchs selling Joseph to the Midianites\*, was without question a Sin, and a breach of Natural Affection; yet by Gods Wise Ordination, it proved the Safety of the whole Church of God in the World, as well as the Egyptian Nation†.

† Gen. 45. 5. 8.  
& Gen. 50. 20.

¶ Mat. 27. 9:

The Jews Unbelief, was a step whereby the Gentiles arose to the knowledge of the Gospel: As the setting of the Sun in one place, is the rising of it in another||. He uses the Corruptions of Men Instrumentally to propagate his Gospel: He built up the True Church by the Preaching of some out of envy, *Phil. 1. 15.* as he blessed Israel out of the Mouth of a False Prophet, *Numb. 23.* How often have the Heresies of Men been the occasion of clearing up the Truth of God, and fixing the more lively Impressions of it on the Hearts of Believers?

Neither



Neither *Judah* nor *Tamar*, in their Lust, dreamt of a Stock for the Redeemer; yet God gave a Son from that Unlawful Bed, whereof *Christ* came according to the flesh; *Gen.* 38. 29. compared with *Mat.* 1. 3.

*Jonah's* Sin was probably the first and remote occasion of the *Ninivites* giving credit to his Prophecy: His Sin was the cause of his Punishment, and his being flung into the Sea, might facilitate the reception of his Message, and excite the *Ninivites* Repentance, whereby a Cloud of severe Judgment was blown away from them.

'Tis thought by some, That when *Jonah* passed through the Streets of *Nineveh* with his Proclamation of *Destruction*, he might be known by some of the Mariners of that Ship, from whence he was cast Over-board into the Sea, and might after their Voyage be occasionally in that City, the *Metropolis* of the Nation, and the place of some of their Births; and might acquaint the People, that this was the same Person they had cast into the Sea by his own consent, for his acknowledg'd running from the *Presence of the Lord*; for that he had told them *Jonah* 1. 10. and the Mariners Prayer, Verse 14. evidenceth it, whereupon they might conclude his Message worthy of Belief, since they knew from such Evidences, that he had sunk into the Bowels of the Waters, and now saw him safe in their Streets, by a Deliverance unknown to them; and that therefore that Power that delivered him, could easily verifie his Word in the threatned Judgment.

Had *Jonah* gone at first without committing that Sin, and receiving that Punishment, his Message had not been judg'd a Divine Prediction, but a fruit of some Enthusiastick madness: His Sin upon this account was the first occasion of averting a Judgment from so great a City.

3. *The good of the Sinner himself is sometimes promoted by Divine Wisdom, ordering the Sin.* As God had not permitted Sin to enter upon the World, unless to bring Glory to himself by it; so he would not let Sin remain in the little World of a Believers Heart, if he did not intend to order it for his good. What is done by Man to his damage and disparagement, is directed by Divine Wisdom to his advantage; not that it is the *intent* of the Sin, or the Sinner; but it is the *event* of the Sin, by the Ordination of Divine Wisdom and Grace.

As without the *Wisdom* of God permitting Sin to enter into the World, some Attributes of God had not been Experimentally known; so some Graces could not have been exercis'd: For where had there been an Object for that Noble Zeal, in vindicating the Glory of God, had it not been invaded by an Enemy? The intenseness of Love to him could not have been so strong, had we not an Enemy to hate for his sake. Where had there been any place for that Noble part of Charity in holy Admonitions and Compassion to the Souls of our Neighbours, and Endeavours to reduce them out of a destructive to a happy Path? Humility would not have had so many grounds for its growth and exercise, and holy Sorrow had had no jewel.

And as without the appearance of Sin, there had been no exercise of the Patience of God; so without Afflictions, the Fruits of Sin, there had been no ground for the exercise of the Patience of a Christian, one of the Noblest parts of Valour. Now Sin being Evil, and such as cannot but be Evil, hath no respect in it self to any good, and cannot work a gracious End, or any thing profitable to the Creature; nay it is a hindrance to any good, and therefore what good comes from it, is *Accidental*, occasioned indeed by Sin, but efficiently caused by the over-ruling *Wisdom* of God, taking occasion thereby to display it self and the Divine Goodness.

The



The *Sins* and *Corruptions* remaining in the Heart of a Man, God orders for good, and there are good effects by the direction of his Wisdom and Grace.

I. *As the Soul respects God.*

1. *God often brings forth a sensibleness of the necessity of Dependence on him.* The Nurse often lets the Child slip, that it may the better know who supports it, and may not be too venturesome and confident of its own strength. *Peter* would trust in *Habitual Grace*, and God suffers him to Fall, that he might trust more in *Assisting Grace*, *Mat. 26. 35. Though I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee.* God leaves sometimes the brightest Souls in an *Eclipse*, to manifest that their Holiness, and the preservation of it, depend upon the darting out his Beams upon them.

As the Falls of Men are the effects of their coldness and remissness in Acts of Faith and Repentance; so the fruit of these Falls is often a running to him for Refuge, and a deeper sensibleness where their Security lies. It makes us Lower our swelling Sails, and come under the Lee and Protection of Divine Grace. When the Pleasures of Sin answer the expectations of a Revolted Creature, he reflects upon his former state, and sticks more close to God, when before God had little of his Company; *Hos. 2. 7. I will return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now.*

As God makes the Sins of Men sometimes an occasion of their Conversion; so he sometimes makes them an occasion of a further Conversion. *Onesimus* run from *Philemon*, and was met with by *Paul*, who proved an Instrument of his Conversion, *Philem. 10. My Son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my Bonds.* His flight from his Master, was the occasion of his Regeneration by *Paul* a Prisoner.

The Falls of Believers God orders to their further stability: He that is fallen for want of using his Staff, will Lean more upon it to preserve himself from the like Disaster.

God, by permitting the Lapses of Men, doth often make them despair of their own strength to subdue their Enemies, and rely upon the strength of *Christ*, wherein God hath laid up Power for us, and so becomes stronger in that strength which God hath ordained for them.

We are very apt to trust in our selves, and have confidence in our own worth and strength; and God lets loose Corruptions to abate this swelling humor. This was the reason of the Apostle *Paul's Thorn in the flesh*, *2 Cor. 12. 9.* whether it were a Temptation, or Corruption, or Sickness, that he might be sensible of his own inability, and where the *sufficiency of Grace* for him was placed.

He that is in danger of Drowning, and hath the Waves come over his head, will with all the might he hath, lay hold upon any thing near him, which is capable to Save him. God lets his People sometimes sink into such a condition, that they may lay the faster hold on him *who is near to all that call upon him.*

2. *God hereby raiseth higher Estimations of the value and virtue of the Blood of Christ.* As the great Reason why God permitted Sin to enter into the World, was to honour himself in the Redeemer; so the Continuance of Sin, and the Conquests it sometimes makes in Renewed Men, are to honour the Infinite value and virtue of the Redeemers Merit, which God from the beginning intended to magnifie: The Value of it, in taking off so much successive Guilt; and the Virtue of it, in washing away so much daily filth.

The Wisdom of God hereby keeps up the Credit of *Imputed Righteousness*, and manifests the Immense Treasure of the Redeemers Merit to pay such daily Debts. Were we perfectly Sanctified, we should stand upon our own Bottom, and imagine no need of the continual and repeated Imputation of the Righteousness of *Christ* for our Justification: We should confide in Inherent Righteousness, and slight Imputed.

If God should take off all Remainders of Sin, as well as the Guilt of it, we should be apt to forget that we are Fallen Creatures, and that we had a Redeemer: But the Reliques of Sin in us, mind us of the necessity of some higher strength



to set us right: They mind us both of our own Misery, and the Redeemers perpetual benefit. God by this keeps up the Dignity and Honour of our *Saviours* Blood to the height, and therefore sometimes lets us see, to our own cost, what filth yet remains in us for the employment of that Blood, which we should else but little think of, and less admire. Our Gratitude is so small to God, as well as Man, that the first Obligations are soon forgot, if we stand not in need of fresh ones successively to second them; we should lose our Thankful Remembrance of the first virtue of *Christs Blood in washing us*, if our Infirmities did not mind us of fresh Reiterations and Applications of it.

Ours *Saviours* Office of *Advocacy* was erected especially for Sins committed after a Justified and Renewed state\*. We should scarce remember we had an *Advocate*, and scarce make use of him without some sensible Necessity; but our Remainders of Sin discover our Impotency, and an impossibility for us either to expiate our Sin, or conform to the Law, which necessitates us to have recourse to that Person whom God hath appointed, to make up the breaches between God and us. \* 1 John 2.1.

So the *Apostle* wraps up himself in the Covenant of Grace and his Interest in Christ, after his conflict with Sin, *Rom. 7. ult. I thank God through Jesus Christ.* Now, after such a Body of Death, a Principle within me that sends up daily steams; yet as long as I serve God with my Mind, as long as I keep the main Condition of the Covenant, there is *no Condemnation*†: Christ takes my part, † *Rom 8.1.* procures my acceptance, and holds the Band of Salvation firm in his hands. The brightness of Christs Grace, is set off by the darkness of our Sin. We should not understand the Sovereignty of his Medicines, if there were no Reliques of Sin for him to exercise his Skill upon: The *Physicians* Art is most experimented, and therefore most valued in Relapses, as dangerous as the former Disease. As the *Wisdom* of God brought our *Saviour* into Temptation, that he might have Compassion to us; so it permits us to be overcome by Temptation, that we might have due Valuations of him.

3. God hereby often engageth the Soul to a greater Industry for his glory. The highest *Persecutors*, when they have become Converts, have been the greatest Champions for that Cause they both hated and oppress. The *Apostle Paul* is such an Instance of this, that it needs no enlargement. By how much they have failed of answering the end of their Creation in glorifying God; by so much the more they summon up all their Force for such an end, after their Conversion; to restore as much as they can of that Glory to God, which they by their Sin had robb'd him of. Their Sins, by the order of *Divine Wisdom*, prove Whetstones to sharpen the edge of their Spirits for God. *Paul* never remembered his Persecuting Fury, but he doubled his Industry for the Service of God, which before he trampled under his feet. The further we go back, the greater Leap many times we take forward.

Our *Saviour*, after his Resurrection, put *Peter* upon the exercise of that Love to him, which had so lately shrunk his head out of Suffering||; and no doubt, but the consideration of his base Denial, together with a reflection upon a gracious Pardon, engag'd his Ingenuous Soul to stronger and fiercer flames of Affection. A Believers Courage for God, is more sharpened oftentimes by the shame of his Fall: He endeavours to repair the faults of his Ingratitude and Disingenuity, by larger and stronger steps of Obedience. As a Man in a fight, having been foil'd by his Enemy, re-assumes new Courage by his Fall; and is many times oblig'd to his Foil, both for his Spirit and his Victory. A gracious Heart will, upon the very motions to sin, double its Vigor, as well as by good ones: It is usually more quickned, both in its motion to God and for God, by the Temptations and Motions to Sin, which run upon it. This is another Good the *Wisdom* of God brings forth from Sin, || John 21. 15, 16, 17.

4. Again,



4. Again, *Humility towards God, is another Good, Divine Wisdom brings forth from the Occasion of Sin.* By this God beats down all good opinion of our selves. *Hezekiah* was more humbled by his fall into Pride, than by all the Distress he had been in by *Senacharib's* Army, 2 Chron. 32. 26. *Peters* Confidence before his Fall, gave way to an humble Modesty after it: You see his Confidence, *Mark* 14. 24. *Though all should be offended in thee, yet will not I;* and you have the mark of his Modesty, *John* 21. 17. 'tis not then, Lord, I will love thee to the death, I will not start from thee; but, Lord, *thou knowest that I love thee.* I cannot assure my self of any thing after this Miscarriage; but, Lord, thou knowest there is a Principle of Love in me to thy Name: He was asham'd, that himself who appeared such a Pillar, should bend as meanly as a Shrub to a Temptation.

\* *Psal.* 51. 5.

† 2 Chron. 32. 25.

The reflection upon Sin, lays a Man as low as Hell in his Humiliation, as the Commission of Sin did in the Merit. When *David* comes to exercise Repentance for his Sin, he begins it from the Well-head of Sin\*, his Original Corruption, and draws down the streams of it to the last commission: Perhaps he did not so seriously humble himself for the Sin of his Nature all his days, so much as at that time; at least, we have not such Evidences of it. And *Hezekiah* humbled himself for the pride of his heart; not only for the Pride of his Act†, but for the Pride in the Heart, which was the Spring of that Pride in Act, in shewing his Treasures to the *Babylonish* Ambassadors. God lets Sin continue in the Hearts of the best in this World, and sometimes gives the Reins to Satan, and a Man's own Corruption, to keep up a sense of the ancient Sale we made of our selves to both.

II. *In regard of our selves.* Herein is the wonder of Divine Wisdom, that God many times makes a Sin, which Meritoriously fits us for Hell, a Providential occasion to fit us for Heaven; when it is an occasion of a more humble Faith and believing Humility, and an occasion of a through Sanctification and growth in Grace, which prepares us for a state of Glory.

‡ *Job* 42. 6.

1. *He makes use of one Sin's breaking out to discover more;* and so brings us to a Self-aborrancy and Indignation against Sin, the first step towards Heaven. Perhaps *David*, before his gross Fall, thought he had no Hypocrisie in him. We often find him appealing to God for his Integrity, and desiring God to try him, if any guile could be found in his Heart, as if he could find none himself: But his Lapse into that great Wickedness, makes him discern much Falseness in his Soul, when he desires God to renew a right Spirit within him, and speaks of Truth in the inward parts, *Psal.* 51. 6, 10. The stirring of one Corruption, makes all the Mud at the bottom appear, which before a Soul did not suspect. No Man would think there were so great a Cloud of Smoke contain'd in a little Stick of Wood, were it not for the powerful operation of the Fire, that both discovers and separates it. *Job*, that Cursed the Day of his Birth, and uttered many Impatient expressions against God upon the account of his own Integrity; upon his Recovery from his Affliction, and Gods close application of himself, was wrought to a greater Abhorrancy of himself, than ever we read he was exercis'd in before‡. The Hostile acts of Sin increase the Souls hatred of it; and the deeper our Humiliations are for it, the stronger impressions of Abhorrancy are made upon us.

2. *He often orders it, to make Conscience more tender, and the Soul more watchful.* He that finds by his Calamity, his Enemy to have more strength against him than he suspected, will double his Guards and quicken his Diligence against him. A being overtaken by some Sin, is by the Wisdom of God dispos'd to make us more fearful of cherishing any occasion to enslave it, and watchful against every motion and start of it. By a Fall, the Soul hath more experience of the Deceitfulness of the Heart; and by observing its methods, is render'd better able to watch against them. 'Tis our Ignorance of the Devices of Satan, and our own hearts, that makes us obnoxious to their Surprizes. A fall into one Sin is often

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often a prevention of more which lay in wait for us. As the fall of a small Body into an Ambush, prevents the design of the Enemy upon a greater. As God suffers Heresies in the Church, to try our Faith; so he suffers Sins to remain, and sometimes to break out, to try our Watchfulness. This advantage he brings from them, to steel our Resolutions against the same Sins, and quicken our Circumspection for the future against new Surprizes by a Temptation. *David's Sin* was *ever before him*, *Psalm 51.3.* and made his Conscience cry, *Blood, Blood,* upon every occasion: He refused the *Water of the Well of Bethlehem*, *2 Sam. 23.16,17.* because it was gained with the hazard of Lives: He could endure nothing that had the taste of Blood in it. Our fear of a thing depends much upon a Trial of it: A Child will not fear too near approaches to the Fire, till he feels the smart of it.

Mortification doth not wholly suppress the Motions of Sin, though it doth the Resolutions to commit it; but that there will be a proneness in the Reliques of it, to entice a Man into those Faults, which upon sight of their blemishes cost him so many Tears. As great Sickneſſes after the Cure are more watch'd, and the Body humour'd, that a Man might not fall from the Crazineſſes they have left in him; which he is apt to do, if Relapses are not carefully provided against. A Man becomes more careful of any thing, that may contribute to the resurrection of an expir'd Disease.

3. *God makes it an occasion of the Mortification of that Sin, which was the matter of the Fall.* The liveliness of one Sin in a Renewed Man, many times is the occasion of the death of it. A wild Beast, while kept close in a Den, is secure in its life; but when it breaks out to Rapine, it makes the Master resolve to prevent any further mischief by the death of it. The impetuous stirring of a humor in a Disease, is sometime *Critical*, and a *Prognostick* of the strength of Nature against it, whereby the Disease loseth its strength by its struggling, and makes room for health to take place by degrees. One Sin is used by God for the destruction both of it self and others: As the Flesh of a *Scorpion* cures the biting of it. It sometimes by wounding us loseth its Sting, and like the *Bee* renders it self incapable of a second Revenge. *Peter*, after his gross Denial, never denied his Master afterwards. The Sin that lay undiscovered, is by a Fall become visible, and so more obvious to a mortifying stroke. The Soul lays the faster hold on Christ and the Promise, and goes out against that Enemy in the Name of that *Lord of Hosts* of which he was too negligent of before; and therefore as he proves more strong, so more successful: He hath more strength, because he hath less confidence in himself, and more in God, the prime strength of his Soul. As it was with Christ, so it is with us, while the *Devil* was bruising his Heel, he was bruising his Head; and while the Devil is bruising our Heel, the God of Peace and Wisdom is sometimes bruising his Head both in us and for us; so that the strugglings of Sin, are often as the faint groans or bitings of a Beast that is ready to expire. 'Tis just with a Man sometimes, as with a Running Fountain that hath Mud at the bottom, when it is stirred the Mud tinctures and defiles it all over; yet some of that Mud hath a vent with the Streams which run from it, so that when it is re-settled at the bottom, 'tis not so much in quantity as it was before. God by his *Wisdom* weakens the Sin, by permitting it to stir and defile.

4. *Sometimes Divine Wisdom makes it an occasion to promote a Sanctification in all parts of the Soul.* As the working of one Ill-humor in the Body, is an occasion of cashiering not only that, but the rest by a sound Purge. As a Man that is a little Cold, doth not think of the Fire; but if he slips with one Foot into an Icy-puddle, he hastens to the Fire, whereby not only that part, but all the rest receive a warmth and strength upon that occasion: Or, as if a Person fall into the Mire, his Cloaths are washed; and by that means cleansed, not only from the filth at present contracted, but from the former Spots that were before unregarded. God by his *Wisdom* brings secret Sins to a discovery, and thereby cleanseth the Soul of them.



*David's Fall* might be ordered as an Answer to his former Petition, *Psal. 19. 12. Cleanse thou me from my secret sins*; and as he did earnestly pray after his Fall, so no doubt but he endeavour'd a thorough Sanctification, *1. Sam. 51. 7. Purge me, wash me*; and that he meant not only a Sanctification from that single Sin, but from all, Root and Branch, is evident by that Complaint of the flaw in his Nature, *verse 5. the Dross and Chaff which lies in the heart is hereby discovered*, and an opportunity administred of throwing it out, and searching all the corners of the Heart to discover where it lay. As God sometimes takes occasion from one Sin, to reckon with Men in a way of Justice for others; so he sometimes takes occasion from the commission of one Sin, to bring out all the actions against the Sinner, to make him, in a way of gracious Wisdom, set more cordially upon the work of Sanctification.

A great Fall sometimes hath been the occasion of a Mans Conversion. The Fall of Mankind occasioned a more blessed Restoration; and the Falls of particular Believers, oftentimes occasion a more extensive Sanctification. Thus the *only Wise God* makes poysons in Nature, to become Medicines in a way of Grace and Wisdom.

5. *Hereby the growth in Grace is furthered.* 'Tis a wonder of Divine Wisdom, to substract sometimes his Grace from a Person, and let him fall into Sin, thereby to occasion the increase of habitual Grace in him, and to augment it by those ways that seem'd to depress it. By making Sins an occasion of a more vigorous acting the contrary Grace, the Wisdom of God makes our Corruptions in their own nature destructive, to become profitable to us. Grace often breaks out more strongly afterwards, as the *Sun* doth with its heat, after it hath been mask'd and interrupted with a Mist: They often, through the mighty working of the Spirit make us more *humble*, and *Humility fits us to receive more Grace from God*†. How doth Faith, that sunk under the Waves, lift up its head again, and carry the Soul out with a greater liveliness? What ardours of Love, what floods of Repenting Tears, what severity of Revenge, what horrors at the remembrance of the Sin, what Tremblings at the appearance of a second Temptation? So that Grace seems to be awaken'd to a *new and more vigorous life*||. The broken Joynt is many times stronger in the Rupture, than it was before. The Luxuriancy of the Branches of Corruption, is an occasion of purging, and purging is with a design to make Grace more fruitful; *Johu 15. 2. He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

Thus Divine Wisdom doth both sharpen and brighten us by the dust of Sin, and ripen and mellow the fruits of Grace by the dung of Corruption. Grace grows the stronger by opposition, as the Fire burns hottest and clearest, when it is most surrounded by a cold Air; and our Natural heat reassumes a new strength by the coldness of the Winter. The soyl under a *Diamond*, though an imperfection in it self, increaseth the beauty and lustre of the Stone. The Enmity of Man was a commendation of the Grace of God: It occasioned the breaking out of the Grace of God upon us; and is an occasion, by the Wisdom and Grace of God, of the increase of Grace many times in us.

How should the Consideration of Gods Incomprehensible Wisdom, in the management of Evil, swallow us up in Admiration; Who brings forth such beauty, such eminent Discoveries of himself, such excellent good to the Creature, out of the bowels of the greatest Contrarieties, making dark Shadows serve to display and beautifie to our Apprehensions the Divine Glory? If Evil were not in the World, Men would not know what Good is: They would not behold the lustre of Divine Wisdom; as without Night we could not understand the beauty of the Day.

Though God is not the Author of Sin, because of his Holiness, yet he is the Administrator of Sin by his Wisdom, and accomplisheth his own Purposes, by the Iniquities of his Enemies, and the Lapses and Infirmities of his Friends.

Thus much for the Second, *The Government of Man in his Lapsed state, and the Government of Sin*, wherein the Wisdom of God doth wonderfully appear.



III. *The Wisdom of God appears in the Government of Man in his Conversion and Return to him.* If there be a Counsel in framing the lowest Creature, and in the minutest passages of Providence; there must needs be a higher *Wisdom* in the government of the Creature to a Supernatural End, and framing the Soul to be a monument of his Glory. The *Wisdom* of God is seen with more Admirations, and in more varieties by the Angels *in the Church*, than in the Creation \*; that is, in forming a Church out of the Rubbish of the World, out of Contrarieties and Contradictions to him; which is greater than the framing a Celestial and Elementary World out of a rude *Chaos*. The most glorious Bodies in the World, even those of the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, have not such stamps of Divine Skill upon them, as the Soul of Man; nor is there so much of *Wisdom* in the Fabrick and Faculties of that, as in the reduction of a blind, wilful, rebellious Soul to its own happiness, and Gods glory; *Eph* 1.11,12. *He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own Will, that we should be for the praise of his glory.* If all things, then this, which is none of the least of his works: To the praise of the glory of his Goodness in his work, and to the praise of the Rule of his work, his Counsel, in both the act of his *Will*, and the act of his *Wisdom*. The restoring of the Beauty of the Soul, and its fitness for its true end, speaks no less *Wisdom*, than the first draught of it in Creation: And the application of Redemption, and bringing forth the fruits of it, is as well an act of his Prudence, as the contrivance was of his Counsel.

Divine *Wisdom* appears,

First, *In the Subjects of Conversion.* His Goodness reigns in the very Dust, and he erects the Walls and Ornaments of his *Temple* from the Clay and Mud of the World: He passes over the *Wise*, and *Noble*, and *Mighty*, that may pretend some grounds of boasting in their own natural or acquired Endowments; and pitches upon the most contemptible Materials, wherewith to build a Spiritual Tabernacle for himself, *1 Cor.* 1.26,27. *The foolish, and weak things of the World*; those that are naturally most unfit for it, and most refractory to it. Herein lies the Skill of an Architect, to render the most knotty, crooked, and inform Pieces, by his Art, subservient to his main purpose and design. Thus God hath ordered from the beginning of the World, contrary Tempers, various Humors, diverse Nations, as Stones of several Natures, to be a *Building* for himself, *fitly framed together*, and to be his own Family †. Who will question the Skill that alters a black Jet into a clear *Crystal*, a *Glow-worm* into a *Star*, a *Lion* into a *Lamb*, and a *Swine* into a *Dove*? The more intricate and knotty any business is, the more eminent is any Mans Ability and Prudence, in untying the knots and bringing it to a good Issue. The more desperate the Disease, the more admirable is the Physicians Skill in the Cure.

He pitches upon Men for his service, who have Natural dispositions to serve him in such ways as he disposeth of them, after their Conversion: So *Paul* was naturally a Conscientious Man; what he did against Christ was from the dictates of an erroneous Conscience, soaked in the *Pharisaical* Interpretations of the *Jewish* Law: He had a strain of Zeal to prosecute what his depraved Reason and Conscience did inform him in. God pitches upon this Man, and works him in the Fire for his Service: He alters not his Natural disposition, to make him of a Constitution and Temper contrary to what he was before; but directs it to another Object, claps in another Byass into the Bowl, and makes his Ill-governed Disposition move in a new way of his own appointment, and guided that Natural heat to the service of that Interest, which he was before ambitious to extirpate. As a high metled Horse, when left to himself, creates both disturbance and danger. But under the conduct of a wise Rider, moves regularly; not by a change of his Natural fierceness, but a skilful management of the Beast to the Riders purpose.

2. *In the seasons of Conversion.* The Prudence of Man consists in the Timing the execution of his Counsels; and no less doth the *Wisdom* of God consist in this. As he is a *God of Judgment*, or *Wisdom*, he waits to introduce his Grace into the Soul in the fittest Season.



This Attribute, *Paul* in the story of his own Conversion puts a particular remark upon, which he doth not upon any other, in that Catalogue he reckons up *1 Tim. 1. 17. Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only Wise God, be Honour and Glory for ever and ever, Amen.* A most solemn *Doxology*, wherein *Wisdom* sits upon the Throne above all the rest, with a special *Amen* to the glory of it; which refers to the Timing of his Mercy so to *Paul*, as made most for the glory of his Grace, and the encouragement of others from him as the Pattern. God took him at a time when he was upon the brink of Hell; when he was ready to devour the New-born Infant Church at *Damascus*; when he was Arm'd with all the Authority from without, and fired with all the Zeal from within, for the prosecution of his Design: *Then* God seizeth upon him, and runs him in a Chancel for his own Honour, and his Creatures happiness.

\* which I have  
upon another  
Occasion noted.

'Tis observable \* how God \* set his Eye upon *Paul* all along in his furious course, and lets him have the Reins, without putting out his Hand to bridle him; yet no motion he could take, but the Eye of God runs along with him: He suffered him to kick against the pricks of Miracles, and the convincing Discourse of *Stephen*, at his Martyrdom. There were many that Voted for *Stephens* Death, as the Witnesses that flung the Stones first at him; but they are not named, only *Saul*, who testified his Approbation as well as the rest, and that by watching the Witnesses Cloaths while they were about that bloody work, *Acts 7. 58. The Witnesses laid their cloaths at a young Mans feet, named Saul.* Again, though Multitudes were consenting to his Death, yet *Acts 8. 1. Saul* only is mentioned. Gods Eye is upon him, yet he would not at that time stop his Fury. He goes on further, and makes havock of the Church, *Acts 8. 3.* He had surely many more Complices, but none are named (as if none regarded with any design of Grace) but *Saul*: Yet God would not reach out his hand to Change him, but Eyes him, waiting for a fitter opportunity, which in his *Wisdom* he did foresee. And therefore *Acts 9. 1.* the Spirit of God adds a *Yet*; *Saul yet breathing out Threatnings.* It was not Gods time yet, but it would be shortly. But when *Saul* was putting in execution his design against the Church of *Damascus*, when the Devil was at the top of his Hopes, and *Saul* in the height of his Fury, and the Christians sunk into the depth of their Fears; the *Wisdom* of God lays hold of the opportunity, and by *Pauls* Conversion at this Season, defeats the Devil, disappoints the High Priests, shields his People, discharges their Fears by pulling *Saul* out of the Devils hands, and forming Satans Instrument to a holy Activity against him.

3. The *Wisdom* of God appears, In the manner of Conversion. So great a Change God makes, not by a destruction, but with a preservation of, and suitability to Nature. As the Devil Tempts us, not by offering violence to our Natures, but by proposing things convenient to our Corrupt Natures; so doth God sollicite us to a Return, by proposals suited to our Faculties. As he doth in Nature convey Nourishment to Men, by means of the Fruits of the Earth, and produceth the Fruits of the Earth by the Influences of Heaven; the Influences of Heaven do not force the Earth, but excite that Natural virtue and strength which is in it. So God produceth Grace in the Soul by the Means of the Word, fitted to the capacity of Man, as Man, and proportion'd to his Rational Faculties, as Rational.

It would be contrary to the the *Wisdom* of God, to move Man like a Stone, to invert the order and privilege of that Nature which he settled in Creation; for then God would in vain have given Man Understanding and Will: Because without moving Men according to those Faculties, they would remain unprofitable and unuseful in Man. † God doth not reduce us to himself, as Logs, by a meer force; or as Slaves forced by a Cudgel, to go forth to that place, and do that work which they have no stomach to: But he doth accommodate himself to those Foundations he hath laid in our Nature, and guides us in a way agreeable thereunto, by an Action as sweet as powerful; clearing our Understandings of dark Principles whereby we may see his Truth, our own Misery, and the Seat of our Happiness; and

† Daille for  
Philip. Part 1.  
p. 543, 546.



and bending our Wills according to this Light, to desire and move conveniently to this End of our Calling: *Efficaciously*, yet *agreeably*; powerfully, yet without imposing on our Natural Faculties; \*sweetly without Violence in ordering the Means, but effectually without Failing in accomplishing the End. And therefore the Scripture calleth it, *Teaching*, John 6 45. *Alluring*, Hos. 2. 14. *Calling us to seek the Lord*, Psal. 27. 8. *Teaching*, is an act of Wisdom; *Alluring*, an act of Love; *Calling*, an act of Authority: But none of them argue a violent constraint. The principle that moves the Will is Supernatural; but the Will, as a Natural Faculty, concurs in the act or motion.

\* Sanderfon,  
Part 2. p. 203.

God doth not act in this in a way of Absolute Power, without an Infinite Wisdom, suiting himself to the Nature of the things he acts upon: He doth not change the *Physical* Nature, though he doth the *Moral*. As in the Government of the World, he doth not make heavy things ascend, nor light things descend, ordinarily; but guides their Motions according to their Natural qualities: So God doth not strain the Faculties beyond their due pitch. He lets the nature of the Faculty remain; but changes the Principle in it: The Understanding remains Understanding, and the Will remains Will. But where there was before Folly in the Understanding, he puts in a Spirit of Wisdom; and where there was before a stoutness in the Will, he forms it to a pliability to his offers. He hath a Key to fit every Ward in the Lock, and opens the Will without injuring the Nature of the Will.

He doth not change the Soul by an alteration of the Faculties, but by an alteration of something in them: Not by an Inroad upon them, or by meer power, or a blind Instinct; but by proposing to the Understanding something to be known, and informing it of the Reasonableness of his Precepts, and the Innate goodness and excellency of his Offers, and by inclining the Will to love and embrace what is proposed. And things are propos'd under those Notions, which usually move our Wills and Affections. We are moved by things as they are good, pleasant, profitable; we entertain things as they make for us, and detest things as they are contrary to us. Nothing affects us but under such qualities, and God sues his Encouragements to these Natural Affections which are in us: His Power and Wisdom go hand in hand together; his Power to act what his Wisdom orders, and his Wisdom to conduct what his Power executes. He brings Men to him in ways suited to their Natural dispositions. The stubborn he tears like a *Lion*, the gentle he wins like a *Turtle*, by sweetness; he hath a Hammer to break the stout, and a Cord of Love to draw the more pliable Tempers: He works upon the more Rational in a way of Gospel Reason; upon the more Ingenuous in a way of kindness, and draws them by the *Cords of Love*.

The *Wise-men* were led to Christ by a *Star*, and Means suited to the knowledge and study that those *Eastern Nations* used, which was much in *Astronomy*: He worketh upon others by Miracles accommodated to every ones sense, and so proportions the Means according to the Nature of the Subjects he works upon.

4. *The Wisdom of God is apparent in his Discipline, and Penal Evils.* The Wisdom of Human Governments is seen in the matter of their Laws, and in the Penalties of their Laws, and in the proportion of the Punishment to the Offence, and in the good that redounds from the Punishment either to the Offender, or to the Community.

The *Wisdom* of God is seen in the Penalty of Death upon the Transgression of his Law; both in that it was the greatest Evil that Man might fear, and so was a convenient means to keep him in his due bound, and also in the proportion of it to the Transgression. Nothing less could be in a Wise Justice inflicted upon an Offender for a Crime against the highest Being, and the Supreme Excellency: But this hath been spoken of before, in the *Wisdom of his Laws*. I shall only mention some few, it would be too tedious to run into all.

1. His



1. His *Wisdom* appears in *Judgments*, in the *suting them to the qualities of Persons, and nature of Sins*. He *deviseth evil*, Jer. 18. 11. his *Judgments* are fruits of *Counsel*. He *also is wise, and will bring Evil*, Isa. 31. 2. Evil *sutable* to the Person offending, and Evil *sutable* to the Offence committed: As the Husbandman doth his *Threshing Instruments* to the Grain: He hath a *Rod* for the *Cummin*, a tenderer Seed, and a *Flayl* for the harder; so hath God greater *Judgments* for the obdurate Sinner, and lighter for those that have something of tenderness in their Wickedness, Isa. 28. 27, 29. *Because he is wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in working*; so Some understand the place, *With the froward, he will shew himself froward*.

He proportions punishment to the Sin, and writes the cause of the Judgment in the Forehead of the Judgment it self. *Sodom* burned in Lust, and was consumed by *Fire from Heaven*. The *Jews* sold Christ for *Thirty pence*; and at the Taking of *Jerusalem*, *Thirty of them* were sold for a Penny. So *Azonibezek* Cut off the *Thumbs and great Toes of others*, and he is served in the same kind, Judg. 1. 7. The *Babel* Builders design'd an indissoluble union, and God brings upon them an unintelligible Confusion. And in *Exod. 9. 9*, the *Albes of the Furnace*, where the *Israelites* burnt the *Egyptian* Bricks, sprinkled towards Heaven, brought *Boyls* upon the *Egyptian* Bodies, that they might feel in their own, what Pain they had caused in the *Israelites* flesh; and find by the smart of the inflamed *Scab*, what they had made the *Israelites* endure. The *Waters* of the River *Nilus* are turned into *Blood*, wherein they had stifled the breath of the *Israelites* Infants: And at last the Prince, and the flower of their Nobility, are drowned in the *Red Sea*.

'Tis part of the *Wisdom* of Justice to proportion punishment to the Crime, and the degrees of Wrath to the degrees of Malice in the Sin. Afflictions also are wisely proportion'd: God, as a *wise Physician*, considers the nature of the humor and strength of the Patient, and sues his Medicines both to the one and the other, 1 Cor. 10. 13.

2. In the seasons of Punishments and Afflictions. He stays till Sin be ripe, that his Justice may appear more equitable, and the Offender more inexcusable; Dan. 9. 14. he *watches upon the evil to bring it upon Men*. To bring it in the just Season, and order for his righteous and gracious Purpose; his Righteous purpose on the Enemies, and his Gracious purpose on his People.

*Jerusalem's* Calamity came upon them, when the City was full of People at the Solemnity of the *Passover*, that he might Mow down his Enemies at once, and Time their Destruction to such a moment wherein they had Timed the Crucifixion of his Son. He watched over the Clouds of his Judgments, and kept them from pouring down, till his People the *Christians* were provided for, and had departed out of the City to the Chambers and Retiring places God had provided for them. He made not *Jerusalem* the Shambles of his Enemies, till he had made *Pella*, and other places, the Arks of his Friends. As *Pliny* tells us, The Providence of God holds the Sea in a calm for *fifteen days*, that the *Halcions*, little Birds, that frequent the Shoar, may build their Nests, and hatch up their Young. The Judgment upon *Sodom* was suspended for some hours, till *Lot* was secured.

|| God suffer'd not the Church to be Invaded by Violent Persecutions, till she was establish'd in the Faith: He would not expose her to so great Combats, while she was weak and feeble, but gave her time to fortifie her self, to be render'd more capable of bearing up under them. He stifled all the motions of Passion the Idolaters might have for their Superstition, till Religion was in such a condition, as rather to be increased and purified, than extinguish'd by Opposition. *Paul* was secured from *Neroes* Chains, and the Nets of his Enemies, till he had broke off the Chain of the Devil from many Cities of the *Gentiles*, and caught them by the Net of the Gospel out of the Sea of the World.

Thus the *Wisdom* of God is seen in the Seasons of Judgments and Afflictions.



3. *It is apparent in the gracious issue of Afflictions and Penal Evils.* It is a part of Wisdom to bring Good out of Evil of Punishment, as well as to bring Good out of Sin. The Church never was so like to Heaven, as when it was most Persecuted by Hell: The Storms often cleans'd it, and the Lance often made it more healthful. *Jobs* Integrity had not been so clear, nor his Patience so illustrious, had not the Devil been permitted to afflict him. God by his Wisdom outwits Satan; when he by his Temptations intends to pollute us and buffet us, God orders it to purifie us; he often brings the clearest light out of the thickest darkness, makes Poysons to become Medicines. † Death it self, the greatest Punishment in this Life, and the entrance into Hell in its own Nature, he hath by his Wise contrivance, made to his People the Gate of Heaven, and the passage into Immortality. Penal Evils in a Nation often end in in a publick Advantage: Troubles and Wars among a People are many times not destroying, but Medicinal, and cure them of that Degeneracy, Luxury, and Effeminateness, they contracted by a long Peace.

† Turretin, Sem. p. 53.

4. *This Wisdom is evident, in the various Ends which God brings about by Afflictions.* The attainment of various Ends by one and the same Means, is the fruit of the Agents Prudence. By the same Affliction, the Wise God corrects sometimes for some base Affection, excites some sleepy Grace, drives out some lurking Corruption, refines the Soul, and ruins the Lust; discovers the greatness of a Crime, the Vanity of the Creature, and the Sufficiency in himself.

The Jews bind Paul, and by the Judge he is sent to Rome; while his Mouth is stopt in Judea, 'tis open'd in one of the greatest Cities of the World, and his Enemies unwittingly contribute to the increase of the knowledge of Christ by those Chains, in that City || that triumphed over the Earth. And his afflictive Bonds added Courage and Resolution to others, *Phil. 1. 14. Many waxing confident by my Bonds*; which could not in their own Nature produce such an effect, but by the order and contrivance of Divine Wisdom: In their own nature, they would rather make them disgust the Doctrine he suffered for, and cool their Zeal in the propagating of it, for fear of the same disgrace and hardship they saw him suffer\*. But the Wisdom of God changed the nature of these Fetters, and conducted them to the glory of his Name, the encouragement of others, the increase of the Gospel, and the comfort of the Apostle himself, *Phil. 1. 12, 13, 18.* The Sufferings of Paul at Rome confirm'd the *Philippians*, a People at a distance from thence, in the Doctrine they had already received at his hands.

\* Daille for Philip. Part 1. pag. 116, 117.

Thus God makes Sufferings sometimes, which appear like Judgments, to be like the Viper on Pauls hand, *Acts 28. 6.* a means to clear up Innocence, and procure favour to the Doctrine among those *Barbarians*. How often hath he multiplied the Church by Death and Massacres, and increased it by those means used to annihilate it?

5. *The Divine Wisdom is apparent in the Deliverances he affords to other parts of the World, as well as to his Church.* There are delicate composures, curious threds in his Webs, and he works them like an Artificer. A goodness wrought for them, *curiously wrought*, *Psal. 31. 19.*

1. *In making the Creatures subservient in their Natural order to his gracious Ends and Purposes.* He orders things in such a manner, as not to be necessitated to put forth an extraordinary Power in things, which some part of the Creation might accomplish. Miraculous productions would speak his Power; but the ordering the Natural course of things, to occasion such effects they were never intended for, is one part of the glory of his Wisdom. And that his Wisdom may be seen in the course of Nature, he conducts the Motions of Creatures, and acts them in their own strength; and doth that by various windings and turnings of them, which he might do in an instant by his Power, in a Supernatural way. Indeed, sometimes he hath made Invasions on Nature, and suspended the Order of their Natural Laws for a season, to shew himself the Absolute Lord and Governour of

of



of Nature: Yet if frequent Alterations of this nature were made, they would impede the knowledge of the Nature of things, and be some bar to the discovery and glory of his *Wisdom*; which is best seen by moving the wheels of Inferiour Creatures, in an exact regularity to his own Ends. He might, when his little Church in *Jacobs* Family was like to starve in *Canaan*, have for their preservation turn'd the *Stones* of the Country into Bread; but he sends them down to *Egypt* to procure Corn, that a way might be opened for their removal into that Country; the Truth of his Prediction in their Captivity accomplish'd, and a way made after the declaration of his great Name *Yehowah*, both in the fidelity of his Word and the greatness of his Power, in their Deliverance from that Furnace of Affliction. He might have struck *Goliath*, the Captain of the *Philistines* Army, with a Thunderbolt from Heaven, when he blasphemed his Name and fear'd his People; but he useth the Natural strength of a *Stone*, and the Artificial motion of a *Sling*, by the Arm of *David*, to confront the *Giant*, and thereby to free *Judea* from the ravage of a potent Enemy. He might have delivered the *Jews* from *Babylon* by as strange Miracles, as he us'd in their Deliverance from *Egypt*: He might have plagu'd their Enemies, gather'd his People into a Body, and protected them by the bulwark of a *Cloud* and a *Pillar of Fire*, against the Assaults of their Enemies. But he uses the differences between the *Persians* and those of *Babylon*, to accomplish his Ends. How sometimes hath the veering about of the Wind on a sudden been the loss of a Navy, when it hath been upon the point of Victory, and driven back the Destruction upon those which intended it for others? And the accidental stumbling, or the Natural fierceness of a Horse, flung down a General in the midst of a Battle, where he hath lost his life by the throng, and his death hath brought a defeat to his Army, and deliverance to the other Party, that were upon the brink of ruine? Thus doth the *Wisdom* of God link things together according to Natural order, to work out his intended preservation of a People.

2. *In the season of Deliverance.* The Timing of Affairs is a part of the *Wisdom* of Man, and an eminent part of the *Wisdom* of God. It is in *due season* he sends the *former and the latter Rain*, when the Earth is in the greatest Indigence, and when his Influences may most contribute to the bringing forth and ripening the Fruit. The dumb Creatures have *their meat from him in due season*\*: And in his due season have his darling People their Deliverance. When *Paul* was upon his Journey to *Damascus* with a Persecuting Commission, he is struck down for the security of the Church in that City. The Nature of the *Lion* is changed in due season, for the preservation of the *Lambs* from worrying. The *Israelites* are miraculously rescued from *Egypt*, when their Wits were at a loss, when their danger to Human understanding was unavoidable; when Earth and Sea refus'd protection, then the *Wisdom* and Power of Heaven stept in to effect that, which was past the skill of the Conductors of that Multitude. And when the Lives of the *Jews* lay at the stake, and their Necks were upon the Block at the mercy of their Enemies Swords, by an Order from *Shushan*; not only a Reprieve, but a Triumph arrives to the *Jews*, by the *Wisdom* of God guiding the Affair, whereby of Persons design'd to execution, they are made Conquerors, and have opportunity to exercise their Revenge instead of their Patience, proving *Triumphers* where they expected to be Sufferers†. How strangely doth God by secret ways bow the hearts of Men, and the nature of things to the execution of that which he designs, notwithstanding all the resistance of that which would traverse the security of his People? How often doth he trap the *wicked* in the work of their own hands, make their confidence to become their ruine, and ensnare them in those Nets they wrought and laid for others? *Psal. 9. 16. The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. He scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts, Luke 1. 51.* in the height of their hopes, when their designs have been laid so deep in the Foundation, and knit and cemented so close in their superstructure, that no Human Power or *Wisdom* could raze them down: He hath then disappointed their Projects, and befool'd their Craft. How often hath he kept back the Fire, when it hath been ready to devour; broke the Arrows, when they have been prepared in the Bow; turn'd the Spear into the bowels of the Bearers, and wounded them at the very instant they were ready to wound others?

\* *Psal. 104. 27.*

† *Eph. 2. & 9.*



3. *In fitting Instruments to his purpose.* He either finds them fit, or makes them on a sudden fit for his gracious ends. If he hath a *Tabernacle* to build, he will fit a *Bezaleel* and an *Aholiab*, with the Spirit of wisdom and Understanding in all *cunning workmanship*, *Exod. 31. 3, 6.* If he finds them crooked pieces, he can, like a wise *Architect*, make them strait Beams for the rearing his House, and for the honour of his Name.

He sometimes picks out men, according to their natural Tempers, and employs them in his Work: *Jehu*, a man of a furious Temper, and ambitious Spirit, is called out for the destruction of *Ahab's* House. *Moses*, a man furnished with all *Egyptian* wisdom, fitted by a generous Education, prepared also by the Affliction he met with in his flight, and one who had had the benefit of conversation with *Jethro*, a man of more than an ordinary wisdom and goodness, as appears by his prudent and religious Counsel; this man is called out to be the Head and Captain of an oppressed People, and to rescue them from their Bondage, and settle the first National Church in the World. So *Elijah*, a high spirited man, of a hot and angry temper, one that slighted the Frowns, and undervalued the Favour of Princes, is set up to stem the Torrent of the *Israelitish* Idolatry. So *Luther*, a man of the same temper, is drawn out by the same Wisdom to encounter the Corruptions in the Church, against such Opposition, which a milder Temper would have sunk under. The *Emib* in *Rev. 12. 16.* is made an Instrument to help the woman: When the Grandees of that Age transferred the Imperial Power upon *Constantine*, who became afterwards a protecting and nursing Father to the Church, a thing end which many of his Favourers never design'd, nor ever dreamt of: But God by his infinite Wisdom made these several Designs like several Arrows shot at Rovers, meet in one Mark to which he directed them, *viz.* in bringing forth an Instrument to render Peace to the World, and Security and Increase to his Church.

4. *The wisdom of God doth wonderfully appear in Redemption.* His wisdom in Creation ravisheth the Eye and Understanding; his wisdom in Government, doth no less affect a curious Observer of the Links and Concatenation of the Means; but his wisdom in Redemption mounts the Mind to a greater astonishment. The works of Creation are the Footsteps of his wisdom; the work of Redemption is the Face of his wisdom: A man is better known by the Features of his Face, than by the Prints of his Feet. We with open face, or a revealed face, beholding the glory of the Lord, *2 Cor. 3. 18.* Face there, refers to God, not to us; the glory of God's wisdom is now open, and no longer covered and veiled by the shadows of the Law. As we behold the Light glorious, as scattered in the Air before the appearance of the Sun, but more gloriously in the Face of the Sun, when it begins its Race in our Horizon. All the wisdom of God in Creation and Government in his variety of Laws, was like the light the three first days of the Creation dispersed about the World, but the fourth day it was more glorious, when all gathered into the Body of the Sun, *Gen. 1. 4, 16.* So the Light of Divine wisdom and glory, was scattered about the World, and so more obscure, till the fourth Divine day of the World about the four thousandth year, it was gathered into one Body, the Sun of Righteousness, and so shone out more gloriously to Men and Angels. All things are weaker, the thinner they are extended, but stronger, the more they are united and compacted in one Body and Appearance. In Christ, in the dispensation by him, as well as in his Person, were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, *Coloss. 2. 3.* Some Doles of wisdom were given out in Creation, but the Treasures of it opened in Redemption; the highest degrees of it that ever God did exert in the World. Christ is therefore called the wisdom of God, as well as the power of God, *1 Cor. 1. 24.* and the Gospel is called the wisdom of God. Christ is the wisdom of God principally, and the Gospel instrumentally, as it is the power of God instrumentally to subdue the heart to himself. This is wrapped up in the appointing Christ as Redeemer, and open'd to us in the revelation of it by the Gospel.



1. *It is a hidden wisdom.* In this regard God is said in the *Text*, to be *only wise*; and it is said to be a *hidden wisdom*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. and *wisdom in a mystery*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 7. incomprehensible to the ordinary Capacity of an Angel, more than the abstruse qualities of the Creatures are to the understanding of man. No wisdom of Men or Angels is able to search all the Veins of this Mine, to tell all the threds of this Web, or to understand the lustre of it; they are as far from an ability fully to comprehend it, as they were at first to contrive it. That wisdom that invented it, can only comprehend it. In the uncreated Understanding only there is a clearness of light without any shadow of darkness. We come as short of full apprehensions of it, as a Child doth of the Counsel of the wisest Prince. It is so hidden from us, that without Revelation, we could not have the least imagination of it; and though it be revealed to us, yet without the help of an Infiniteness of Understanding, we cannot fully fathom it: 'Tis such a tractate of Divine wisdom, that the Angels never before had seen the Edition of it, till it was publish'd to the World. *Eph.* 3. 10. *To the intent that now unto Principalities and Powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. Now made known to them, not before; and now made known to them in the heavenly places.* They had not the knowledge of all heavenly Mysteries, though they had the possession of heavenly Glory: They knew the *Prophecies* of it in the Word, but attained not a clear Interpretation of those Prophecies, till the things that were prophesied of came upon the Stage.

2. *Manifold wisdom*: So 'tis called. As *manifold* as mysterious. Variety in the Mystery, and Mystery in every part of the Variety. It was not one single act, but a variety of Counsels met in it; a conjunction of excellent ends and excellent means. The glory of God, the salvation of Man, the defeat of the Apostate Angels, the discovery of the blessed Trinity in their Nature, Operations, their combin'd and distinct Acts and Expressions of Goodness: The means are the conjunction of *two Natures* infinitely distant from one another; the union of Eternity and Time, of Mortality and Immortality: Death is made the way to Life, and Shame the path to Glory. The weakness of the Cross is the reparation of man; and the Creature is made wise by the *foolishness of preaching*; fallen man grows rich by the poverty of the Redeemer, and man is filled by the emptiness of God: The Heir of Hell made a Son of God, by God's taking upon him the *form of a Servant*; the Son of Man advanc'd to the highest degree of Honour, by the Son of God becoming of *no reputation*.

'Tis called *Eph.* 1. 8. *abundance of wisdom and prudence*. Wisdom in the Eternal Counsel, contriving a way; Prudence in the Temporary Revelation, ordering all Affairs and Occurrences in the World for the attaining the end of his Counsel. Wisdom refers to the Mystery; Prudence to the manifestation of it in fit ways and convenient seasons. Wisdom, to the contrivance and order; Prudence, to the execution and accomplishment. In all things God acted as *became him*, as a wise and just Governour of the World, *Heb.* 2. 10. Whether the wisdom of God might not have found out some other way, or whether he were, in regard of the necessity and naturalness of his Justice, limited to this, is not the question: But that it is the best and wisest way for the manifestation of his glory, is out of question.

This wisdom will appear in the different Interests reconciled by it. In the Subject, the *second Person* in the Trinity, wherein they were reconciled: In the *two Natures*, wherein he accomplish'd it; whereby God is made known to man in his Glory, Sin eternally condemned, and the repenting and believing sinner eternally rescued. The honour and righteousness of the Law vindicated both in the Precept and Penalty. The *Devil's* Empire overthrown by the same Nature he had overturned, and the Subtilty of Hell defeated by that Nature he had spoiled: The Creature engaged in the very act to the highest Obedience and Humility, that as God appears as a God upon his Throne, the Creature might appear in the lowest posture of a Creature, in the depths of resignation and dependance; the publication of this made in the Gospel, by ways congruous to the wisdom which appear-  
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ed in the execution of his Counsel, and the Conditions of enjoying the fruit of it, most wise and reasonable.

1. *The greatest different Interests are reconcil'd, Justice in punishing, and Mercy in pardoning.* For man had broken the Law, and plung'd himself into a Gulf of Misery: The Sword of Vengeance was unsheathed by Justice, for the punishment of the Criminal: The Bowels of Compassion were stirred by Mercy, for the rescue of the Miserable. Justice severely beholds the Sin, and Mercy compassionately reflects upon the Misery. Two different claims are entered by those concerned Attributes: Justice votes for Destruction, and Mercy votes for Salvation. Justice would draw the Sword, and drench it in the blood of the Offender; Mercy would stop the Sword, and turn it from the breast of the Sinner. Justice would edge it, and Mercy would blunt it. The Arguments are strong on both sides.

1. *Justice pleads.* I Arraign, before thy Tribunal, a Rebel, who was the glorious Work of thy Hands, the Center of thy rich Goodness, and a Counterpart of thy own Image; he is indeed miserable, whereby to excite thy Compassion; but he is not miserable, without being Criminal. Thou didst create him in a state, and with ability to be otherwise: The riches of thy Bounty aggravate the blackness of his Crime. He is a Rebel, not by necessity, but *will*. What constraint was there upon him to listen to the Counsels of the Enemy of God? What force could there be upon him, since it is without the compass of any Creature to work upon, or constrain the Will? Nothing of Ignorance can excuse him; the Law was not ambiguously express'd, but in plain words, both as to Precept and Penalty; it was writ in his Nature in legible Characters: Had he received any disgust from thee after his Creation, it would not excuse his Apostacy, since, as a Sovereign, thou wert not obliged to thy Creature. Thou hadst provided all things richly for him; he was crowned with glory and honour: Thy infinite power had bestowed upon him an Habitation richly furnished, and varieties of Servants to attend him. Whatever he viewed without, and whatever he viewed within himself, were several Marks of thy Divine Bounty, to engage him to Obedience: Had there been some reason of any disgust, it could not have ballanced that kindness which had so much reason to oblige him: However, he had received no courtesie from the fallen Angel, to oblige him to turn into his Camp. Was it not enough, that one of thy Creatures would have stript thee of the glory of Heaven, but this also must deprive thee of thy glory upon Earth, which was due from him to thee as his Creator? Can he charge the difficulty of the Command? No: It was rather below, than above his strength. He might rather complain that it was no higher, whereby his Obedience and Gratitude might have a larger scope, and a more spacious Field to move in, than a Precept so light, so easie, as to abstain from one Fruit in the Garden. What excuse can he have, that would prefer the liquorishness of his Sense before the dictates of his Reason, and the Obligations of his Creation? The Law thou didst set him, was righteous and reasonable, and shall Righteousness and Reason be rejected by the Supream and Infalible Reason, because the rebellious Creature hath trampled upon it? What? must God abrogate his holy Law, because the Creature hath slighted it? What Reflection will this be upon the Wisdom that enacted it; And upon the Equity of the Command and Sanction of it? Either Man must suffer, or the Holy Law be expunged, and for ever out of date. And is it not better, Man should Eternally smart under his Crime, than any dishonourable Reflections of Unrighteousness be cast upon the Law, and of folly, and want foresight upon the Lawgiver? Not to punish, would be to approve the Devils Lye, and justify the Creatures Revolt. It would be a Condemnation of thy own Law as unrighteous, and a Sentencing thy own Wisdom as imprudent. Better Man should for ever bear the Punishment of his Offence, than God bear the dishonour of his Attributes: Better Man should be miserable, than God should be unrighteous, unwise, false, and tamely bear



bear the denial of his Sovereignty. But what advantage would it be to gratifie Mercy by Pardoning the Malefactor? Besides the irreparable dishonour to the Law, the falsifying thy veracity in not executing the denounced threatning, he would receive encouragement by such a grace to spurn more at thy Sovereignty, and oppose thy Holiness by running on in a course of sin with hopes of Impunity: If the Creature be restored, it can not be expected, that he that hath sared so well, after the breach of it, should be very careful of a future observance: His easy readmission would abet him in the repetition of his Offence, and thou shalt soon find him cast off all Moral dependance on thee. Shall he be restored without any Condition, or Covenant? He is a Creature not to be governed without a Law, and a Law is not to be enacted without a Penalty. What future regard will he have to thy Precept, or what fear will he have of thy Threatning, if his Crime be so lightly past over? Is it the stability of thy Word? What reason will he have to give credit to that, which he hath found already disregarded by thy self? Thy Truth in future Threatnings will be of no force with him, who hath experienced thy laying it aside in the former. 'Tis necessary therefore that the rebellious creature should be punished for the preservation of the honour of the Law and the honour of the Lawgiver, with all those perfections that are united in the composure of it.

2. Secondly, *Mercy doth not want a Plea.* 'Tis true indeed, the sin of man wants not its aggravations: He hath slighted thy Goodness, and accepted thy Enemy as his Counsellor; but it was not a pure act of his own, as the *Devils* revolt was: He had a Tempter, and the Devil had none: He had, I acknowledge, an Understanding to know thy Will, and a Power to obey it; yet he was mutable, and had a capacity to fall. It was no difficult task that was set him, nor a hard yoke that was laid upon him; yet he had a brutish part, as well as a rational, and sense as well as Soul; whereas the fallen Angel was a pure Intellectual Spirit. Did God create the World to suffer an eternal dishonour, in letting himself be outwitted by *Satan*, and his work wrested out of his hands? Shall the work of eternal Counsel presently sink into irreparable destruction, and the honour of an Almighty and wise Work be lost in the ruine of the Creature? This would seem contrary to the nature of thy Goodness, to make Man only to render him miserable: To design him in his Creation for the Service of the Devil, and not for the Service of his Creator. What else could be the issue, if the chief work of thy Hand, defaced presently after the erecting, should for ever remain in this marred condition? What can be expected upon the continuance of his misery, but a perpetual hatred, and enmity of thy Creature against thee? Did God in Creation design his being hated, or his being loved by his Creature? Shall God make a holy Law, and have no obedience to that Law from that Creature whom it was made to govern? Shall the curious workmanship of God, and the excellent Engravings of the Law of Nature in his heart, be so soon defaced, and remain in that blotted condition for ever? This fall thou couldst not but in the treasures of thy Infinite Knowledge foresee: Why hadst thou Goodness then to Create him in an Integrity, if thou wouldst not have Mercy to pity him in Misery? Shall thy Enemy for ever trample upon the honour of thy Work, and triumph over the glory of God, and applaud himself in the success of his subtilty? Shall thy Creature only passively glorifie thee as an Avenger, and not actively as a Compassionater? Am not I a perfection of thy Nature as well as Justice? Shall Justice ingross all, and I never come into view? 'Tis resolved already, that the fallen Angels shall be no Subjects for me to exercise my self upon; and I have now less reason than before to plead for them: They fell with a full consent of will, without any motion from another; and not content with their own Apostacy they envy thee, and thy glory upon Earth, as well as in Heaven, and have drawn into their party the best part of the Creation below: Shall *Satan* plunge the whole Creation in the same irreparable ruine with himself? If the Creature be restored, will he contract a boldness in sin by impunity? Hast thou not a Grace to render him ingenuous in Obedience, as well as a Com-

passion



passion to recover him from Misery? What will hinder, but that such a Grace, which hath established the standing Angels, may establish this recovered Creature? If I am utterly excluded from exercising my self on men, as I have been from Devils, a whole Species is lost; nay, I can never expect to appear upon the Stage: If thou wilt quite ruine him by Justice, and create another World, and another Man, if he stand, thy Bounty will be eminent, yet there is no room for Mercy to act, unless by the Commission of sin, he exposeth himself to Misery; and if sin enter into another World, I have little hopes to be heard then, if I am rejected now. Worlds will be perpetually created by Goodness, Wisdom, and Power: Sin entering into these Worlds, will be perpetually punished by Justice; and Mercy, which is a Perfection of thy Nature, will for ever be commanded silence, and lye wrapt up in an eternal Darkness. Take occasion now therefore to expose me to the knowledge of thy Creature, since without Misery, Mercy can never set foot into the World.

Mercy pleads, if man be ruined, the Creation is in vain; Justice pleads, if man be not sentenced, the Law is in vain; Truth backs Justice, and Grace abets Mercy. What shall be done in this seeming Contradiction? Mercy is not manifested, if man be not pardoned; Justice will complain, if man be not punished.

3. *An expedient is found out by the wisdom of God to answer these Demands, and adjust the Differences between them.* The wisdom of God answers, I will satisfy your Pleas. The Pleas of Justice shall be satisfied in punishing, and the Pleas of Mercy shall be received in pardoning. Justice shall not complain for want of Punishment, nor Mercy for want of Compassion. I will have an infinite Sacrifice to content Justice; and the Vertue and Fruit of that Sacrifice shall delight Mercy. Here shall Justice have punishment to accept, and Mercy shall have Pardon to bestow. The Rights of both are preserved, and the Demands of both amicably accorded in punishment and pardon, by transferring the punishment of our Crimes upon a Surety, exacting a Recompence from his Blood by Justice, and conferring life and salvation upon us by Mercy, without the expence of one drop of our own. Thus is Justice satisfied in its Severities, and Mercy in its Indulgences. The riches of Grace are twisted with the terrors of Wrath. The bowels of Mercy are wound about the flaming Sword of Justice, and the Sword of Justice protects and secures the bowels of Mercy. Thus is God righteous without being cruel, and merciful without being unjust; his Righteousness inviolable, and the World recoverable. Thus is a resplendent Mercy brought forth in the midst of all the Curses, Confusions, and Wrath threatned to the Offender.

This is the admirable temperament found out by the wisdom of God: His Justice is honoured in the Sufferings of Man's Surety; and his Mercy is honoured in the application of the Propitiation to the Offender. *Rom. 3. 24, 25. Being justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ: Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.* Had we in our Persons been Sacrifices to Justice, Mercy had for ever been unknown; had we been solely fostered by Mercy, Justice had for ever been secluded; had we, being guilty, been absolved, Mercy might have rejoiced, and Justice might have complained; had we been solely punished, Justice would have triumphed, and Mercy grieved. But by this *medium* of Redemption, neither hath ground of Complaint: Justice hath nothing to charge, when the Punishment is inflicted; Mercy hath whereof to boast when the Surety is accepted. The Debt of the Sinner is transferred upon the Surety, that the Merit of the Surety may be conferred upon the Sinner; so that God now deals with our sins in a way of consuming Justice, and with our Persons in a way of relieving Mercy: 'Tis highly better, and more glorious, than if the Claim of one had been granted, with the exclusion of the Demand of the other: It had then been either an unrighteous Mercy, or a merciless Justice: 'Tis now a righteous Mercy, and a merciful Justice.

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2. *The Wisdom of God appears in the Subject or Person wherein these were accorded*; The second Person in the blessed Trinity. There was a congruity in the Son's undertaking and effecting it rather than any other Person, according to the order of the Persons, and the several functions of the Persons, as represented in Scripture. The Father, after Creation, is the *Law-giver*, and presents man with the Image of his own Holiness and the way to his Creatures happiness: But after the Fall, man was too impotent to perform the Law, and too polluted to enjoy a Felicity. *Redemption* was then necessary; not that it was necessary for God to redeem man, but it was necessary for man's happiness, that he should be recovered. To this the second Person is appointed, that by Communion with him, man might derive a happiness, and be brought again to God. But since man was blind in his *Understanding*, and an Enemy in his *will* to God, there must be the exerting of a Vertue to enlighten his mind, and bend his Will to understand, and accept of this Redemption: And this work is assigned to the third Person, the Holy Ghost.

1. *It was not congruous that the Father should assume Human Nature, and suffer in it for the Redemption of man.* He was first in order, he was the Law-giver, and therefore to be the Judge. As Lawgiver, it was not convenient he should stand in the stead of the Law-breaker; and as Judge, it was as little convenient he should be reputed a Malefactor: That he who had made a Law against sin, denounced a Penalty upon the commission of sin, and whose part it was actually to punish the sinner, should become sin for the wilful Transgressor of his Law. He being the *Rector*, how could he be an *Advocate* and Intercessor to himself? How could he be the Judge and the Sacrifice? A Judge, and yet a Mediator to himself? If he had been the Sacrifice, there must be some Person to examine the validity of it, and pronounce the Sentence of acceptance. Was it agreeable that the Son should sit upon a Throne of Judgment, and the Father stand at the Bar, and be responsible to the Son? That the Son should be in the place of a Governour, and the Father in the place of the Criminal? That the Father should be bruised \* by the Son, as the Son was by the Father; † that the Son should awaken a Sword against the Father, as the Father did against the Son; that the Father should be sent by the Son, as the Son was by the Father\*: The order of the Persons in the blessed Trinity had been inverted and disturbed. Had the Father been sent, he had not been first in order; the Sender is before the Person sent: As the Father begets, and the Son is begotten, *Joh. 1. 14.* so the Father sends, and the Son is sent. He whose order is to send, cannot properly send himself.

\* *16. 52. 10.*  
† *Zach. 13. 7.*

\* *Gal. 4. 4.*

2. *Nor was it congruous that the Spirit should be sent upon this Affair.* If the Holy Ghost had been sent to redeem us, and the Son to apply that Redemption to us, the order of the Persons had also been inverted: The Spirit then, who was third in order, had been second in Operation. The Son would then have received of the Spirit, as the Spirit doth now of Christ, and shew it unto us, *Joh. 1. 15.* As the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, so the proper Function and Operation of it, was in order after the Operations of the Father and the Son: Had the Spirit been sent to redeem us, and the Son sent by the Father, and the Spirit to apply that Redemption to us; the Son in his acts had proceeded from the Father and the Spirit; the Spirit, as sender, had been in order before the Son; whereas the Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ, as sent by Christ from the Father, *Gal. 4. 6. Joh. 15. 27.* But as the order of the Works, so the order of the Persons is preserved in their several Operations. *Creation*, and a Law to govern the Creature, precedes *Redemption*. Nothing, or that which hath no being, is not capable of a redeemed being. Redemption supposeth the existence and the misery of a Person redeemed. As Creation precedes Redemption, so Redemption precedes the application of it. As Redemption supposeth the being of the Creature, so application of Redemption supposeth the efficacy of Redemption. According to the order of these Works, is the order of the Operations of the three Persons. *Creation* belongs to the Father, the first Person. *Redemption*, the second work, is the Function of the Son, the second Person. *Application*, the third



third work, is the Office of the Holy Ghost, the third Person. The Father orders it, the Son acts it, the Holy Ghost applies it. He purifies our Souls to understand, believe, and love these Mysteries. He forms Christ in the womb of the Soul, as he did the Body of Christ in the womb of the Virgin. As the Spirit of God *moved upon the waters*, to garnish and adorn the World, after the Matter of it was formed, *Gen. 1. 2.* so he moves upon the heart, to supple it to a compliance with Christ, and draws the Lineaments of the new Creation in the Soul, after the Foundation is laid.

The Son pays the price that was due from us to God, and the Spirit is the earnest of the Promises of Life and Glory purchased by the Merit of that Death. \* 'Tis to be observed, that the *Father*, under the dispensation of the Law, proposed the Commands with the Promises and Threatnings, to the Understandings of Men and *Christ*, under the dispensation of Grace, when he was upon the Earth, proposeth the Gospel as the Means of Salvation, exhorts to Faith as the Condition of salvation; but it was neither the Function of the one, or the other, to display such an efficacy in the Understanding, and Will to make men believe and obey, and therefore there were such few Conversions in the time of Christ, by his Miracles: But this work was reserved, for the fuller and brighter appearance of the *Spirit*, whose Office it was to convince the World of the necessity of a Redeemer, because of their lost Condition; of the Person of the Redeemer, the Son of God; of the sufficiency and efficacy of Redemption, because of his righteousness and acceptance by the Father. The Wisdom of God is seen in preparing and presenting the Objects, and then in making impression of them upon the Subjects he intends. And thus is the *order of the three Persons* preserved.

\* Ambrase.  
Moral. Tom. 5.  
p. 478, 479,  
480.

2. *The second Person had the greatest congruity to this work.* He by whom God created the World, was most conveniently employed in restoring the defaced World: Who more fit to recover it from its lapsed state, than he that had *erected* John 1. 4. it in its primitive state? *Hebr. 1. 2.* He was the light of men in Creation, and therefore it was most reasonable he should be the light of men in Redemption. Who fitter to reform the Divine Image, than he that first formed it? Who fitter to speak for us to God, than he who was *the Word*? *Joh. 1. 1.* Who could better intercede with the Father, than he who was the only begotten and beloved Son? Who so fit to redeem the forfeited Inheritance as the *Heir of all things*? Who fitter and better to prevail for us to have the right of Children, than he that possessed it by Nature? We fell from being the Sons of God, and who fitter to introduce us into an adopted state, than the Son of God? Herein was an expression of the richer Grace, because the first sin was immediately against the wisdom of God, by an ambitious affectation of a wisdom equal to God: That that Person, who was the *wisdom of God*, should be made a Sacrifice for the expiation of the sin against Wisdom.

3. *The wisdom of God is seen in the two Natures of Christ, whereby this Redemption was accomplished.* The Union of the two Natures was the Foundation of the Union of God, and the fallen Creature.

1. *The Union it self is admirable: The Word is made Flesh*, *Joh. 1. 14.* One equal with God in the form of a Servant, *Phil. 2. 7.* When the *Apostle* speaks of God manifested in the flesh, he speaks the wisdom of God in a Mystery, *1 Tim. 3. 16.* That which is incomprehensible to the Angels, which they never imagined before it was revealed, which perhaps they never knew till they beheld it. I am sure, under the Law the Figures of the *Cherubims* were placed in the Sanctuary with their faces looking towards the *Propitiatory*, in a perpetual posture of Contemplation and Admiration, *Exod. 37. 9.* to which the *Apostle* alludes, *1 Pet. 1. 12.*

Mysterious is the wisdom of God to unite Finite and Infinite, Almightyness and Weakness, Immortality and Mortality, Immutability with a Thing subject to Change; to have a Nature from Eternity, and yet a Nature subject to the Revolutions of Time; a Nature to make a Law, and a Nature to be subjected to the Law; to be God blessed for ever, in the bosom of his Father, and an Infant exposed



## A Discourse upon the

poised to Commodities from the Womb of his Mother: Terms seeming most distant from union, most incapable of conjunction, to shake hands together, to be most intimately conjoynd; Glory and Vileness, Fulness and Emptiness, Heaven and Earth; the Creature with the Creator; he that made all things, in one Person with a Nature that is made; *Immanuel*, God and Man in one: That which is most Spiritual to partake of that which is Carnal flesh and blood: \* One with the Father in his Godhead, one with us in his Manhood: The Godhead to be in him in the fullest Perfection, and the Manhood in the greatest Purity: The Creature one with the Creator, and the Creator one with the Creature. Thus is the incomprehensible Wisdom of God declared in the *Word being made Flesh*.

\* Heb. 2. 14.

† Savana  
L. 2. cap. 7.  
p. 219.

2. *In the manner of this Union.* A Union of two Natures, yet no Natural Union. It transcends all the Unions visible among Creatures †: It is not like the Union of Stones in a Building, or of two pieces of Timber fastned together, which touch one another only in their Superficies and outside, without any intimacy with one another. By such a kind of Union, God would not be man: The Word could not so be made Flesh. Nor is it a Union of Parts to the whole, as the Members and the Body; the Members are Parts, the Body is the whole; for the whole results from the Parts, and depends upon the Parts: But Christ being God, is independent upon any thing. The parts are in order of Nature before the whole, but nothing can be in order of Nature before God. Nor is it as the Union of two Liquors, as when Wine and Water are mixed together; for they are so Incorporated, as not to be distinguish'd from one another; no man can tell which Particle is Wine, and which is Water. But the Properties of the Divine Nature are distinguishable from the Properties of the Humane. Nor is it as the Union of the Soul and Body, so as that the Deity is the form of the Humanity, as the Soul is the form of the Body: For as the Soul is but a part of the Man, so the Divinity would be then but a part of the Humanity; & as a Form, or the Soul is in a state of Imperfection, without that which it is to inform; so the Divinity of Christ would have been Imperfect, till it had assumed the Humanity. And so the perfection of an Eternal Deity would have depended on a Creature of Time.

This Union of two Natures in Christ is incomprehensible: And it is a mystery we cannot arrive to the top of, How the Divine Nature, which is the same with that of the Father and the Holy Ghost, should be united to the Human Nature; without its being said, that the Father and the Holy Ghost were united to the Flesh; but the Scripture doth not encourage any such Notion: It speaks only of the Word, the Person of the Word being made Flesh. And in his being made Flesh, distinguisheth him from the Father, as *the only begotten of the Father*, *Joh. 1. 14.* The Person of the Son was the term of this Union.

1. *This Union doth not confound the Properties of the Deity, and those of the Humanity.* They remain distinct and entire in each other. The Deity is not changed into Flesh, nor the Flesh transform'd into God: They are distinct and yet united: They are conjoynd, and yet unmixt: The Dues of either Nature are preserved. 'Tis impossible that the Majesty of the Divinity can receive an alteration: 'Tis as impossible that the meanness of the Humanity can receive the Impressions of the Deity, so as to be changed into it, and a creature be metamorphos'd into the Creator, and Temporary Flesh become Eternal, and Finite mount up into Infinity: As the Soul and Body are united, and make one Person, yet the Soul is not changed into the perfections of the Body, nor the Body into the perfections of the Soul. There is a change made in the Humanity by being advanced to a more Excellent Union, but not in the Deity; as a change is made in the Air, when it is enlightned by the Sun, not in the Sun, which communicates that brightness to the Air. *Athanasius* makes the *burning Bush* to be a type of Christs Incarnation, *Exod. 3. 2.* The Fire signifying the Divine Nature, and the Bush the human. The Bush is a branch springing up from the Earth, and the Fire descends from Heaven; as the Bush was united to the Fire, yet was not hurt by the flame, nor converted into Fire, there remained a difference between the Bush and the Fire, yet the properties of the Fire shined in the Bush, so that the whole Bush seemed to be



be on Fire. So in the Incarnation of Christ, the Human Nature is not swallowed up by the Divine, nor changed into it, nor confounded with it; But so united, that the properties of both remain firme: *Two* are so become *one* that they remain *two* still: One person in Two Natures, containing the glorious perfections of the Divine, and the weakneses of the Humane. *The fulness of the Deity dwells bodily in Christ, Col. 2. 9.*

2. *The Divine Nature is united to every part of the Humanity.* The whole Divinity to the whole Humanity; so that no part but may be said to be the Member of God, as well as the Blood is said to be the *Blood of God, Acts 20. 28.* By the same reason it may be said, the Hand of God, the Eye of God, the Arm of God. As God is infinitely present every where, so as to be excluded from no place; so is the Deity hypostatically every where in the Humanity not excluded from any part of it; As the light of the Sun in every part of the Air; as a sparkling splendor in every part of the Diamond. Therefore it is concluded by all that acknowledge the Deity of Christ, that when his Soul was separated from the Body, the Deity remained united both to Soul and Body, as light doth in every part of a broken Christal.

3. *Therefore perpetually united Coloss. 2. 9. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily.* It *Dwells* in him, not lodges in him as a Traveller in an Inn: It resides in him as a fixed habitation. As God describes the perpetuity of his presence in the Ark by his habitation or *dwelling* in it, *Exod. 29. 44.* so doth the *Apostle* the inseparable duration of the Deity in the Humanity, and the indissoluble Union of the Humanity with the Deity. It was united on Earth, it remains united in Heaven. It was not an Image or an Apparition, as the Tongues wherein the Spirit came upon the *Apostles*, were a Temporary Representation, not a thing united perpetually to the person of the Holy Ghost.

4. *It was a personal Union.* It was not an union of persons, though it was a personal union; So *Davenant* expounds, *Col. 2. 9.* Christ did not take the Person of Man, but the Nature of Man into subsistence with himself. The Body and Soul of Christ were not united in themselves, had no subsistence in themselves, till they were united to the Person of the Son of God. If the Person of a Man were united to him, the Human Nature would have been the Nature of the Person so united to him, and not the Nature of the Son of God, *Heb. 2. 14, 16.* *Forasmuch then as the Children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him, that had the power of death, that is, the Devil. For verily he took not on him the nature of Angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham.* He took flesh and blood to be his own Nature, perpetually to subsist in the Person of the *Logos*, which must be by a Personal Union, or no way: The Deity united to the Humanity, and both Natures to be one Person. This is the mysterious and manifold Wisdom of God.

3. *The end of this Union.*

1. *He was hereby fitted to be Mediator.* He hath something like to Man, and something like to God. If he were in all things only like to Man, he would be at a distance from God: If he were in all things only like to God, he would be at a distance from Man. He is a true Mediator between Mortal Sinners, and the Immortal Righteous One. He was near to us by the Infirmities of our Nature, and near to God by the Perfections of the Divine; as near to God in his Nature, as to us in ours; as near to us in our Nature as he is to God in the Divine. Nothing that belongs to the Deity, but he possesses; nothing that belongs to the Human Nature, but he is clothed with.

He had both the Nature which had offended, and that Nature which was offended; a Nature to please God, and a Nature to pleasure us: A Nature whereby he experimentally knew the excellency of God, which was injured, and understood the Glory due to him, and consequently the Greatness of the Offence, which was to be measur'd by the Dignity of his Person: And a Nature whereby, he might be sensible of the Miseries contracted by, and endure the calamities



• Gomb. d. 11.  
1137 42.

due to the Offender, that he might both have Compassion on him, and make due Satisfaction for him. \* He had *two distinct Natures*, capable of the Affections and Sentiments of the two Persons he was to accord; he was a just Judge of the Rights of the one, and the demerit of the other. He could not have this full and perfect Understanding, if he did not possess the Perfections of the one, and the Qualities of the other: The one fitted him for *things appertaining to God*, Heb. 5. 1. and the other furnisht him with a sense of the *Infirmities of man*, Heb. 4. 15.

2. He was hereby fitted for the working out the happiness of man. A Divine Nature to communicate to man, and a Human Nature to carry up to God.

† Heb. 9. 12.

1. He had a Nature whereby to suffer for us, and a Nature whereby to be meritorious in those Sufferings. A Nature to make him capable to bear the Penalty, and a Nature to make his Sufferings sufficient for all that embraced him. A Nature capable to be exposed to the flames of Divine Wrath, and another Nature incapable to be crusht by the weight, or consum'd by the heat of it: A Human Nature to suffer, and stand a Sacrifice in the stead of Man; a Divine Nature to sanctifie these Sufferings, and fill the Nostrils of God with a sweet savour, and thereby atone his wrath: The one to bear the stroke due to us, and the other to add merit to his Sufferings for us. Had he not been Man, he could not have filled our place in suffering; and could he otherwise have suffered, his sufferings had not been applicable to us; and had he not been God, his Sufferings had not been meritoriously and fruitfully applicable. Had not his Blood been the Blood of God, it had been of as little advantage as the Blood of an ordinary Man, or the Blood of the *Legal Sacrifices* †. Nothing less than God, could have satisfied God for the injury done by Man. Nothing less than God, could have countervail'd the Torments due to the offending Creature: Nothing less than God, could have rescued us out of the hands of the Jaylor, too powerful for us.

2. He had therefore a Nature to be compassionate to us, and victorious for us. A Nature sensibly to compassionate us, and another Nature to render those Compassions effectual for our Relief; he had the Compassions of our Nature to pity us, and the Patience of the Divine Nature to bear with us. He hath the affections of a Man to us, and the power of a God for us: A Nature to disarm the Devil for us, and another Nature to be sensible of the working of the Devil in us, and against us. If he had been only God, he would not have had an experimental sense of our Misery; and if he had been only Man, he could not have vanquish'd our Enemies: Had he been only God, he could not have died; and had he been only Man, he could not have conquered Death.

3. A Nature efficaciously to instruct us. As Man, he was to instruct us sensibly; as God, he was to instruct us infallibly. A Nature whereby he might converse with us, and a Nature whereby he might influence us in those Converses. A Human Mouth to minister Instruction to Man, and a Divine Power to imprint it with efficacy.

|| Amyraut.  
morals Tom. 5.  
p. 458, 459.

4. A Nature to be a pattern to us. A Pattern of Grace as Man, as *Adam* was to have been to his Posterity. || A Divine Nature shining in the Human, the Image of the invisible God in the glass of our Flesh, that he might be a perfect Copy for our Imitation. Col. 1. 15. *The Image of the invisible God, and the first-born of every Creature* in conjunction The Vertues of the Deity are sweetned and tempered by the Union with the Humanity, as the Beams of the Sun are by shining through a colour'd Glass, which condescends more to the weakness of our eye.

Thus the Perfections of the invisible God, breaking through the first-born of every Creature, glittering in Christ's created state, became more sensible for Contemplation by our Mind, and more imitable for Conformity in our practise.



5. *A Nature to be a ground of confidence in our approach to God.* A Nature wherein we may behold him, and wherein we may approach to him. A Nature for our comfort, and a Nature for our confidence. Had he been only Man, he had been too feeble to assure us; and had he been only God, he had been too high to attract us: But now we are allured by his Human Nature, and assured by his Divine, in our drawing near to Heaven. Communion with God was desired by us, but our Guilt stifled our hopes, and the Infinite Excellency of the Divine Nature, would have damp't our hopes of speeding; but since these *two Natures*, so far distant, are met in a Marriage-knot, we have a ground of hope, nay, an earnest that the Creator and believing Creature shall meet and converse together.

And since our sins are expiated by the Death of the Human Nature in conjunction with the Divine, our Guilt, upon believing, shall not hinder us from this comfortable approach. Had he been only Man, he could not have assured us an approach to God: Had he been only God, his Justice would not have admitted us to approach to him; he had been too terrible for guilty Persons, and too holy for polluted Persons to come near to him: But by being made Man, his Justice is tempered, and by his being God and Man, his Mercy is ensured. A Human Nature he had, one with us, that we might be related to God, as one with him.

6. *A Nature to derive all good to us.* Had he not been Man, we had had no share or part in him: A Satisfaction by him had not been imputed to us. If he were not God, he could not communicate to us Divine Graces and Eternal Happiness; he could not have had power to convey so great a good to us, had he been only Man; and he could not have done it, according to the Rule of inflexible righteousness, had he been only God. As Man, he is the way of Conveyance; as God, he is the spring of Conveyance. From this Grace of Union, and the Grace of Union, we find *Rivers of Waters flowing, to make glad the City of God.* Believers are his Branches, and draw Sap from him as he is their Root in his Human Nature, and have an endless duration of it from his Divine. Had he not been Man, he had not been in a state to obey the Law: Had he not been God as well as Man, his Obedience could not have been valuable to be imputed to us.

How should this Mystery be studied by us, which would afford us both Admiration and Content! Admiration, in the incomprehensibility of it; Contentment, in the fitness of the Mediator. By this Wisdom of God we receive the props of our Faith, and the fruits of Joy and Peace. Wisdom consists in chusing fit means, and conducting them in such a method, as may reach with good success the variety of Marks which are aimed at. Thus hath the Wisdom of God set forth a Mediator, suited to our wants, fitted for our supplies, and ordered so the whole Affair by the union of these *two Natures* in the Person of the Redeemer, that there could be no disappointment, by all the bustle Hell and hellish Instruments could raise against it.

4. *The Wisdom of God is seen in this way of Redemption, in vindicating the Honour and Righteousness of the Law, both as to Precept and Penalty.* The first and irreversible design of the Law, was Obedience. The Penalty of the Law had only entrance upon Transgression. Obedience was the design, and the Penalty was added to enforce the observance of the Precept. *Gen. 2. 17. Thou shalt not eat; there is the Precept: In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt dye; There is the Penalty.* Obedience was our Debt to the Law, as Creatures; Punishment was due from the Law to us, as Sinners: We were bound to endure the Penalty for our first Transgression, but the Penalty did not Cancel the Bond of future Obedience: The Penalty had not been incurr'd without transgressing the Precept; yet the Precept was not abrogated by enduring the Penalty. Since Man so soon revolted, and by his Revolt fell under the threatening, the Justice of the Law had been honoured by Man's sufferings, but the holiness, and equity of the Law had been honoured by mans Obedience. The Wisdom of God finds out a *Medium* to satisfy both: The Justice of the Law is preserved in the Execution of the Penalty; and the Holiness of the Law is honoured in the observance of the Precept.



The Life of our Saviour is a Conformity to the Precept, and his Death is a Conformity to the Penalty; the Precepts are exactly performed, and the Curse punctually executed, by a voluntary observing the one, and a voluntary undergoing the other. It is obeyed, as if it had not been transgressed, and executed as if it had not been obeyed.

† Rom. 8. 3.  
 Matth. 3. 15.

It became the Wisdom, Justice, and Holiness of God, as the Rector of the World, to exact it, *Heb. 2. 10.* and it became the holiness of the Mediator to fulfill all the righteousness of the Law†. And thus the Honour of the Law was vindicated in all the parts of it. The Transgression of the Law was Condemned in the Flesh of the Redeemer, and the Righteousness of the Law was fulfilled in his Person: And both these acts of Obedience, being counted as one Righteousness, and imputed to the believing sinner, render him a subject to the Law, both in its preceptive and minatory part. By *Adams* sinful acting we were made sinners, and by *Christ's* righteous acting we are made righteous. *Rom. 5. 10.* As by one mans disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. The Law was obeyed by him, that the righteousness of it might be fulfilled in us, *Rom. 8. 4.* 'Tis not fulfilled in us, or in our actions, by incerency, but fulfilled in us by imputation of that righteousness which was exactly fulfilled by another. As he died for us, and rose again for us, so he lived for us. The Commands of the Law were as well observed for us, as the Threatnings of the Law were endured for us. This justification of a sinner, with the preservation of the holiness of the Law in truth, in the inward parts, in sincerity or intention, as well as conformity in action, is the wisdom of God, the Gospel-wisdom which *David* desires to know, *Psal 51. 6.* Thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom; or as some render it, the hidden things of wisdom. Not an inherent wisdom in the acknowledgments of his sin, which he had confessed before; but the wisdom of God in providing a Medicine, so as to keep up the holiness of the Law in the observance of it in Truth, and the averting the Judgment due to the sinner. In and by this way methodiz'd by the wisdom of God, all doubts and troubles are discharg'd. Naturally if we take a view of the Law to behold its Holiness and Justice, and then of our hearts, to see the contrariety in them to the command, and the pollution repugnant to its holiness; and after this cast our eyes upward, and behold a flaming Sword, edg'd with Curses and Wrath; Is there any matter, but that of terror, afforded by any of these? But when we behold, in the life of *Christ*, a conformity to the Mandatory part of the Law, and in the Cross of *Christ*, a sustaining the minatory part of the Law; this wisdom of God gives a well-grounded and rational dismiss to all the horrors that can seize upon us.

5. The wisdom of God in Redemption is visible in manifesting two contrary Affections at the same time, and in one act: The greatest hatred of Sin, and the greatest love to the Sinner. In this way he punishes the sin without ruining the sinner, and repairs the ruins of the sinner, without indulging the sin. Here is eternal love, and eternal hatred; a condemning the sin to what it merited, and an advancing the sinner to what he could not expect. Herein is the choicest love, and the deepest hatred manifested. An implacableness against the sin, and a placableness to the sinner. His hatred of sin hath been discovered in other ways; in punishing the Devil without remedy; sentencing Man to an expulsion from Paradise, though seduced by another; in accursing the Serpent, an irrational Creature, though but a misguided Instrument. The whole tenor of his Threatnings declare his loathing of sin, and the sprinklings of his Judgments in the World, and the horrible expectations of terrified Consciences confirm it. But what are all these Testimonies to the highest evidence that can possibly be given in the sheathing the Sword of his wrath in the heart of his Son? If a Father should order his Son to take a mean Garb below his Dignity, order him to be dragg'd to Prison, seem to throw off all Affection of a Father for the severity of a Judge, condemn his Son to a horrible Death, be a Spectator of his bleeding Condition, withhold his hand from allwaging his Misery, regard it rather with Joy than Sorrow, give him a bitter Cup to drink, and stand by to see him drink it off to the bottom, dregs and all,



all, and fath frown'd in his face all the while ; and this not for any fault of his own, but the Rebellion of some Subjects he undertook for, and that the Offenders might have a pardon seal'd by the Blood of the Son the sufferer ; all this would evidence his detestation of the Rebellion, and his affection to the Rebels ; his hatred to their Crime, and his love to their Welfare. This did God do ; He *delivered Christ up for our Offences, Rom. 8. 32. the Father gave him the Cup, John 18. 18.* the Lord *bruised him with pleasure, Isa. 53. 10.* and that for sin : He transfer'd upon the shoulders of his Son the pain we had merited, that the Criminal might be restor'd to the place he had forfeited. He hates the sin so, as to condemn it for ever, and wrap it up in the Curse he had threatn'd ; and loves the sinner believing and repenting so, as to mount him to an expectation of a happiness exceeding the first state, both in glory and perpetuity. Instead of an Earthly Paradise, lays the Foundation of an Heavenly Mansion, brings forth a weight of Glory from a weight of Misery, separates the comfortable light of the Sun, from the scorching heat we had deserved at his hands. Thus hath Gods hatred of sin been manifested. He is at an eternal Defiance with sin, yet nearer in alliance with the sinner, than he was before the Revolt : As if man's miserable Fall had endeared him to the Judge. This is the wisdom and prudence of *Grace wherein God hath abounded, Eph. 1. 9.* A wisdom in twisting the happy restoration of the broken Amity, with an everlasting Curse, upon that which made the breach, both upon sin the Cause, and upon *Satan* the Seducer to it. Thus is hatred and love in their highest glory manifested together : Hatred to sin, in the death of Christ, more than if the torments of Hell had been undergone by the sinner ; and love to the sinner, more than if he had, by an absolute and simple Bounty, bestow'd upon him the possession of Heaven ; because the gift of his Son, for such an end, is a greater token of his boundless Affections, than a reinstating Man in Paradise. Thus is the wisdom of God seen in Redemption ; consuming the sin, and recovering the sinner.

6. *The wisdom of God is evident in overturning the Devil's Empire, by the Nature he had vanquish'd, and by ways quite contrary to what that malicious Spirit could imagine.* The Devil indeed read his own doom in the first Promise, and found his ruin resolv'd upon, by the means of the *Seed of the Woman*, but by what Seed, was not so easily known to him \*. And the methods whereby it was to be brought about, was a Mystery kept secret from the malicious Devils, since it was not discovered to the obedient Angels. He might know from *Isa. 53.* that the Redeemer was assur'd to divide the Spoil with the strong, and rescue a part of the lost Creation out of his hands ; and that this was to be effected, by making his Soul an offering for sin : But could he imagine which way his Soul was to be made such an Offering ? He shrewdly suspected Christ just after his Inauguration into his Office by Baptism, to be the Son of God. But did he ever dream that the *Messiah*, by dying as a reputed Malefactor, should be a Sacrifice for the expiation of the sin, the Devil had introduced by his subtilty ? Did he ever imagine a Cross should dispossess him of his Crown, and that dying groans should wrest the Victory out of his hands ?

\* And indeed the Devil's Empire, managed by the Devils, declared that they were not long to hold their Scepter in the world, but the Hebrew Child should vanquish them.

He was conquer'd by that Nature he had cast headlong into ruin : A Woman, by his subtilty, was the occasion of our death ; and a Woman, by the conduct of the only wise God, brings forth the Author of our Life, and the Conquerour of our Enemies. The Flesh of the old *Adam* had infected us, and the Flesh of the new *Adam* cures us. *1 Cor. 15. 21. By man came death ; by man also came the resurrection from the dead.* We are killed by the old *Adam*, and rais'd by the new. As among the *Israelites*, a fiery Serpent gave the wound, and a brazen Serpent administers the Cure. The Nature that was deceived bruise the Deceiver, and razeth up the Foundations of his Kingdom. *Satan* is defeated by the Counsels he took to secure his Possession, and loses the Victory by the same means whereby he thought to preserve it.



His tempting the Jews to the sin of Crucifying the Son of God, had a contrary success to his tempting *Adam* to eat of the Tree. The first death he brought upon *Adam*, ruined us, and the death he brought by his Instruments upon the second *Adam*, restored us. By a Tree, if one may so say, he had Triumphed over the World, and by the fruit of a Tree, one hanging upon a Tree, he is discharged of his power over us, *Heb. 2. 14. Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death*. And thus the Devil ruins his own Kingdom while he thinks to confirm & enlarge it. And is defeated by his own policy, whereby he thought to continue the World under his chains, and deprive the Creator of the World of his purposed honour. What deeper Counsell could he resolve upon for his own security, than to be instrumental in the death of him, who was God, the terror of the Devil himself, and to bring the Redeemer of the World to expire with disgrace in the sight of a multitude of men? Thus did the Wisdom of God shine forth in restoring us by methods seemingly repugnant to the end he aimed at, & above the suspicion of a subtle Devil, whom he intended to baffle.

Could he Imagine that we should be healed by stripes, quickened by death, purified by blood, crowned by a cross, advanced to the highest honour by the lowest humility, comforted by sorrows, glorified by disgrace, absolved by condemnation, and made rich by poverty? That the sweetest honey should at once spring out of the belly of a dead Lion, the Lion of the tribe of Judah and out of the bosom of the living God? How wonderful is this Wisdom of God! That the seed of the woman, born of a mean Virgin, brought forth in a stable, spending his days in affliction, misery and poverty, without any pomp and splendor, passing some time in a *Carpenters* shop, with *Carpenters* tools, and afterwards exposed to a horrible and disgraceful death, should by this way pull down the gates of Hell, subvert the kingdom of the Devil, and be the hammer to break in pieces that power, which he had so long exercised over the World! Thus became he the Author of our life, by being bound for a while in the chains of death, and arrived to a principality over the most malicious powers by being a prisoner for us, and the avenger of their rage and fury.

Mark 6. 5.

7. The Wisdom of God appears, *In giving us this way the surest ground of comfort and the strongest incentive to obedience.* The Rebel is reconciled, and the rebellion shamed; God is propitiated and the sinner sanctified by the same blood. What can more contribute to our comfort & confidence, than Gods richest gift to us? What can more enflame our love to him, than our recovery from death by the oblation of his Son to misery and death for us? It doth as much engage our duty as secure our happiness. It presents God glorious and gracious, and therefore every way fit to be trusted in regard of the interest of his own glory in it, and in regard of the effusions of his grace by it. It renders the Creature obliged in the highest manner, and so awakens his industry to the strictest and noblest obedience. Nothing so effectual as a crucified Christ to wean us from sin and stifle all motions of despair; a means, in regard of the Justice signaliz'd in it, to make man to hate the sin which had ruined him; and a means, in regard of the love express'd, to make him *delight in that Law* he had violated, *2. Cor. 5. 14, 15. The love of Christ*, and therefore the love of God express'd in it, *constrains us no longer to live to our selves.*

1. *It is a ground of the highest comfort and confidence in God.* Since he hath given such an evidence of his impartial truth to his threatening for the honour of his Justice, we need not question but he will be as punctual to his promise for the honour of his mercy. 'Tis a ground of confidence in God, since he hath redeemed us in such a way as glorifies the steadiness of his veracity, as well as the severity of his Justice; We may well trust him for the performance of his promise, since we have experience of the execution of his threatening; his merciful truth will as much engage him to accomplish the one, as his just truth did to inflict the other. The goodness which shone forth in weaker rays in the Creation, breaks out with stronger beams in redemption. And the mercy which before the appearance of



of Christ was manifested in some small Rivulets, diffuseth itself like a boundless Ocean. That God that was our Creator, is our Redeemer, the *Repayrer of our Breaches*, and the *Restorer of our Paths to dwell in*. And the plenteous Redemption from all Iniquity, manifested in the Incarnation and Passion of the Son of God, is much more a ground of hope in the Lord, than it was in the past Ages, when it could not be said, *the Lord hath, but the Lord shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities*, *Psal. 130. 8*. It is a full Warrant to cast our selves into his Arms.

2. *An incentive to obedience.*

1. *The Commands of the Gospel require the obedience of the Creature.* There is not one Precept in the Gospel which interferes with any rule in the Law, but strengthens it, and represents it in its true exactness: The heat to scorch us is allaid, but the light to direct us is not extinguish'd. Not the least allowance to any sin is granted; not the least affection to any sin is indulg'd. The Law is temper'd by the Gospel, but not null'd and cast out of doors by it; It enacts that none but those that are sanctified, shall be glorified; that there must be Grace here, if we expect Glory hereafter; that we must not presume to expect an admittance to the Vision of Gods face, unless our Souls be clothed with a robe of *Holiness*, *Heb. 12. 14*. It requires an obedience to the whole Law in our intention and purpose, and an endeavour to observe it in our actions: It promotes the honour of God, and ordains a universal Charity among men; it reveals the whole Counsel of God, and furnisheth men with the holiest Laws.

2. *It presents to us the exactest pattern for our Obedience.* The redeeming Person is not only a Propitiation for the sin, but a pattern to the sinner, *1 Pet. 2. 21*. The Conscience of man, after the fall of *Adam*, approved of the reason of the Law, but by the corruption of Nature, man had no strength to perform the Law. The possibility of keeping the Law by Human Nature, is evidenced by the Appearance and life of the Redeemer, and an assurance given that it shall be advanc'd, to such a state, as to be able to observe it: We aspire to it in this life, and have hopes to attain it in a future: And while we are here, the Actor of our Redemption is the copy for our Imitation. The Pattern to imitate is greater than the Law to be ruled by. What a lustre did his Vertues cast about the World? How attractive are his Graces? With what high Examples, for all Duties, has he furnish'd us out of the copy of his Life?

3. *It presents us with the strongest motives to Obedience.* *Tit. 2. 11, 12.* *The grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness.* What Chains bind faster and closer than love? Here is love to our nature, in his Incarnation; love to us, though Enemies, in his Death and Passion; Encouragements to Obedience by the proffers of Pardon for former Rebellions: By the disobedience of man, God introduceth his redeeming Grace, and ingageth his Creature to more Ingenious and excellent returns than his Innocent state could oblige him to. In his Created state he had goodness to move him, he hath the same goodness now to oblige him as a Creature, and a greater love and mercy to oblige him as a repaired Creature; and the terror of Justice is taken off, which might in venom his Heart as a Criminal. In his revolted state he had misery to discourage him; in his redeemed state he hath love to attract him. Without such a way, black despaire had seized upon the Creature exposed to a remediless misery: And God would have had no returns of love from the best of his earthly Works: But if any sparks of Ingenuity be left, they will be excited by the efficacy of this Argument.

The willingness of God to receive returning sinners, is manifested in the highest degree; and the willingness of a sinner to return to him in duty hath the strongest engagements. He hath done as much to incourage our Obedience, as to illustrate his Glory. We cannot conceive what could be done greater for the salvation of our Souls, and consequently what could have been done more to enforce our observance. We have a Redeemer, as man, to copy it to us, and as God to perfect us in it. It would make the heart of any to tremble to wound him that hath provided such a salve for our Sores, and to make Grace a warrant for Rebellion:



lion: Motives, capable to form Rocks into a flexibleness. Thus is the Wisdom of God seen in giving us a ground of the surest confidence, and furnishing us with incentives to the greatest Obedience by the horrors of wrath, death and sufferings of our Saviour.

8. The Wisdom of God is apparent in the Condition he hath settled for the enjoying the fruits of Redemption, and this is faith, a wise and reasonable Condition: And the concomitants of it.

1. In that it is suited to mans lapsed state and Gods Glory. Innocence is not required here; that had been a Condition impossible in its own nature after the Fall: The rejecting of Mercy is now only condemning, where mercy is proposed: Had the Condition of Perfection in Works been required, it had rather been a condemnation than redemption. Works are not demanded whereby the Creature might ascribe any thing to himself; but a Condition which continues in man a sense of his Apostacy, abates all aspiring Pride, and makes the reward of Grace not of Debt: A Condition whereby Mercy is owned, and the Creature emptied: Flesh silenced in the Dust, and God set upon his Throne of Grace and Authority: The Creature brought to the lowest debasement, and Divine Glory raised to the highest pitch. The Creature is brought to acknowledge Mercy, and seal to Justice, to own the Holiness of God in the hatred of sin, the Justice of God in the Punishment of sin, and the Mercy of God in the pardoning of sin: A condition that despoils Nature of all its pretended excellency: Beats down the glory of man at the foot of God, 1 Cor. 1. 29. 31. It subjects the Reason and Will of man to the Wisdom and Authority of God; it brings the Creature to an unreserved submission and intire resignation. God is made the Sovereign Cause of all; the Creature continued in his emptiness, and reduced to a greater dependance upon God than by a Creation; depending upon him for a constant influx for an intire happiness. A Condition that renders God glorious in the Creature, and the fallen creature happy in God: God glorious in his Condescension to Man, and Man happy in his emptiness before God.

Faith is made the Condition of mans recovery, that the *lofty looks* of man might be humbled, and the *haughtiness of man* be pulled down, Isa. 2. 11. that every towering *imagination* might be levelled, 2. Cor. 10. 5. Man must have all from without doors; he must not live upon himself, but upon anothers allowance. He must stand to the provision of God, and be a perpetual Sutor at his Gates.

2. A Condition opposite to that which was the cause of the Fall. We fell from God an unbelief of the Threatning, he recovers us by a belief of the Promise; by Unbelief we laid the Foundation of Gods dishonour, by Faith therefore God exalts the Glory of his free Grace. We lost our selves by a desire of self dependance, and our return is ordered by a way of self-emptiness. 'Tis reasonable we should be restored in a way contrary to that whereby we fell: We sinned by a refusal of cleaving to God, tis a part of divine Wisdom to restore us in a denial of our own righteousness and strength\*. *Man having sinned by Pride, the Wisdom of God humbles him (saith one) at the very root of the Tree of Knowledge, and makes him deny his own Understanding, and submit to Faith, or else, for ever to lose his desired Felicity.*

\* Laud against  
Fisher. p. 5.

3. It is a Condition suited to the Common Sentiment and custome of the World. There is more of belief than reason in the World. All Instructors and Masters in Sciences and Arts, require first a belief in their Disciples, and a resignation of their Understandings and Wills to them. And it is the Wisdom of God to require that of man, which his own reason makes him submit to another which is his fellow Creature. He therefore that quarrels with the Condition of Faith, must quarrel with all the World, since Belief is the beginning of all Knowledge†; yea, and most of the Knowledge in the World, may rather come under the title of Belief, than of Knowledge: For what we think we know this day, we may find from others such Arguments as may stagger our Knowledge, and make us doubt

† Bradward p.  
28.



of that we thought our selves certain of before: Nay sometimes we change our Opinions, our Selves, without an Instructor; and see a reason to entertain an Opinion quite contrary to what we had before. And if we found a general Judgment of others to vote against what we think we know, it would make us give the less Credit to our selves and our own Sentiments. All Knowledge in the World, is only a belief depending upon the testimony or arguings of others; for indeed it may be said of all men as in *Job, 8. Job. 9. We are but of yesterday, and know nothing*: Since therefore Belief is so universal a thing in the World, the Wisdom of God requires that of us which every man must count reasonable, or render himself utterly ignorant of any thing. It is a Condition that is common to all Religions. All Religions are Founded upon a Belief: Unless men did believe future things, they would not hope nor fear. A Belief and Resignation was required in all the Idolatries in the World; so that God requires nothing but what a universal custome of the World gives its suffrage to the reasonableness of: Indeed justifying Faith is not suted to the Sentiments of men; but that Faith which must precede justifying, a believe of the Doctrine, though not comprehended by Reason, is common to the custome of the World\*. 'Tis no less madness not to submit our Reason to Faith, than not to regulate our Fancies by Reason.

\* I. neway  
p. 82.

4. This Condition of *Faith and Repentances is suted to the Conscience of Men*. The Law of Nature teaches us, that we are bound to believe every revelation from God, when it is made known to us: And not only to assent to it as true, but embrace it as good. This Nature dictates, that we are as much obliged to believe God, because of his Truth, as to love him, because of his Goodness. Every mans Reason tells him, he cannot obey a Precept, nor depend upon a Promise, unless he believes both the one and the other. No man's Conscience, but will inform him upon hearing the revelation of God, concerning his excellent contrivance of Redemption, and the way to Enjoy it, that it is very reasonable he should strip off all affections to sin, lye down in Sorrow and bewail what he hath done amiss against so tender a God. Can you expect that any man that Promises you a great honour or a rich donative, should demand less of you than to trust his word, bear an affection to him, and return him kindness? Can any less be expected by a Prince than obedience from a pardoned Subject, and a redeemed Captive? If you have injured any man in his Body, Estate, Reputation, would you not count it a reasonable Condition for the partaking of his Clemency and Forgiveness, to express a hearty sorrow for it, and a resolution not to fall into the like Crime again? Such are the Conditions of the Gospel, suted to the Consciences of men.

5. The Wisdom of God appears, in that *this condition was only likely to attain the end*. There are but two Common Heads appointed by God, *Adam* and *Christ*: By one we are made a *living Soul*, by the other a *quickning Spirit*: By the one we are made sinners, by the other we are made righteous. *Adam* fell as a Head, and all his members, his whole Issue and Posterity fell with him, because they proceeded from him by natural Generation. But since the *second Adam* can not be our Head by natural Generation, there must be some other way of engrafting us in him, and uniting us to him as our Head, which must be Moral and Spiritual; this can not rationally be conceived to be by any other way than What is sutable to a reasonable Creature, and therefore must be by an act of the Will, Consent and Acceptance, and owning the terms setled for an Admission to that Union. And this is that we properly call Faith, and therefore called a *receiving of him*, *John 1. 12.*



Now this Condition of enjoying the Fruits of Redemption *could not be a bare Knowledge*; for that is but only an act of the Understanding, and doth not in itself include the act of the Will, and so would have united only one Faculty to him, not the whole Soul: But Faith in an act both of the Understanding and Will too; and principally of the Will, which doth presuppose an act of the Understanding: For there cannot be a Perswasion in the Will, without a Proposition from the Understanding. The Understanding must be convinced of the truth and goodness of a thing, before the Will can be perswaded to make any motion towards it; and therefore all the Promises, Invitations and Proffers are suted to the Understanding and Will; To the Understanding in regard of Knowledge, to the Will in regard of Appetite; to the Understanding as true, to the Will as good; To the Understanding as practical and influencing the Will.

2. Nor could it be *an intire Obedience*. That, as was said before, would have made the Creature have some matter of boasting, and this was not sutable to the Condition he was sunk into by the fall. Besides, mans Nature being corrupted, was rendered incapable to obey, and unable to have one *thought* of a due Obedience. 2 Cor. 3. 5.

When man turned from God, and upon that was turned out of Paradise, his return was impossible by any strength of his own; his Nature was as much corrupted as his re-entrance into *Paradise* was prohibited. That Covenant, whereby he stood in the garden, required a perfection of action and intention in the observance of all the Commands of God: But his Fall had crack'd his Ability to recover happiness, by the terms and condition of an *intire Obedience*; yet man being a person governable by a Law, and capable of happiness by a Covenant; if God would restore him, and enter into a Covenant with him, we must suppose it to have some Condition, as all Covenants have. That Condition could not be works, because mans Nature was polluted. Indeed, had God reduced mans Body to the dust, and his Soul to nothing, and framed another man, he might have govern'd him by a Covenant of Works: But that had not been the same man that had revolted, and upon his revolt was stain'd and disabled. But suppose God had by any transcendent Grace, wholly purified him from the stain of his former Transgression, and restored to him the strength and ability he had lost, might he not as easily have rebelled again? And so the Condition would never have been accomplisht, the Covenant never have been performed, and Happiness never have been enjoyed. There must be some other Condition then in the Covenant God would make for mans Security.

Now Faith is the most proper for receiving the Promise of Pardon of Sin: Belief of those promises is the first natural reflection that a Malefactor can make upon a pardon offered him, and acceptance of it is the first consequent from that believe. Hence is Faith entitled a *perswasion of*, and *embracing the Promises*, Heb. 11. 13. and a *receiving the atonement*, Rom. 5. 11. Thus the Wisdom of God is apparent in annexing such a Condition to the Covenant, whereby man is restored, as answers the end of God for his glory, the State, Conscience, and necessity of Man, and had the greatest congruity to his recovery.

9. This Wisdom of God is manifest in the manner of the publishing and propagating this Doctrine of Redemption.

1. In the gradual discoveries of it. Flashing a great light in the face of a suddain, is amazing; should the Sun glare in our Eye in all its brightness on a suddain, after we have been in a thick darkness, it would blind us, in stead of comforting us: So great a work as this must have several digestions.

God



God first reveals of what Seed the Redeeming Person should be, *the Seed of the Woman*, Gen. 3. 15. Then of what Nation, Gen. 26. 4. then of what Tribe, Gen. 49. 12. of the Tribe of *Judah*; then of what Family, the family of *David*; then what works he was to do, what sufferings to undergoe. The first Predictions of our Saviour were obscure. *Adam* could not well see the Redemption in the Promise, for the punishment of death which succeeded in the Threatning; the Promise exercised his Faith, and the Obscurity and bodily Death, his Humility. The Promise made to *Abraham* was clearer than the Revelations made before, yet he could not tell how to reconcile his Redemption with his Exile. God supported his Faith by the Promise, and exercised his Humility by making him a Pilgrim, and keeping him in a perpetual dependance upon him in all his motions.

The Declarations to *Moses* are brighter than those to *Abraham*. The delineations of *Christ* by *David* in the *Psalms*, more illustrious than the former. And all those exceeded by the Revelations made to the Prophet *Isaiah*, and the other *Prophets*, according as the Age did approach, wherein the Redeemer was to enter into his Office.

God wrapt up this Gospel in a multitude of Types and Ceremonies, fitted to the Infant state of the Church, Gal. 4. 3. An Infant State is usually affected with sensible things; yet all those Ceremonies were fitted to that great end of the Gospel, which he would bring forth in time to the World. And the Wisdom of God in them would be amazing, if we could understand the analogy between every Ceremony in the Law and the thing signified by it. As it cannot but affect a diligent Reader to observe that little account of them we have by the *Apostle Paul*, sprinkled in his Epistles, and more largely in that to the *Hebrews*. As the Political Laws of the *Jews* flowed from the depth of the Moral Law, so their Ceremonial did from the depth of Evangelical Counsels, and all of them had a special relation to the honour of God, and the debasing the Creature.

Though God formed the Mass and Matter of the World at the first creation at once, yet his Wisdom took *six days* time for the disposing and adorning it. The more illustrious truths of God are not to be comprehended on a sudden by the weakness of men: Christ did not declare all Truths to his Disciples in the time of his life, because they were not able at that present to bear them, *John*, 16. 12. *Ye cannot bear them now*. Some were reserved for his Resurrection, others for the coming of the Spirit; and the full discovery of all kept back for another World. This Doctrine God figured out in the Law, Oracled by the Prophets, and unvail'd by Christ and his Apostles:

2. The Wisdom of God appeared, in using all proper means to render the belief of it easie.

1. The most minute things that were to be transacted, were predicted in the ancient foregoing Age, long before the coming of the Redeemer: The vinegar and gall offered to him upon the Cross, the parting his Garments, the not breaking of his Bones, the piercing of his Hands and Feet, the betraying of him, the slighting of him by the multitude, all were exactly painted and represented in variety of Figures. There was Light enough to good men not to mistake him; and yet not so plain, as to hinder bad men from being Serviceable to the counsels of God in the crucifying of him when he came.

2. The translation of the Old Testament from the private Language of the *Jews*, into the most publick Language of the World. That Translation which we call *Septuagint*, from *Hebrew* into *Greek*, some years before the coming of Christ, that Tongue being most diffused at that time, by reason of the *Macedonian* Empire raised by *Alexander*, and the University of *Athens*, to which other Nations resorted for Learning and Education: This was a preparation for the Sons of *Japhet* to dwell in the



*Tents of Shem.* By this was the entertainment of the Gospel facilitated: When they compar'd the Prophecies of the *Old Testament*, with the Declarations of the *New*, and found things so long predicted before they were transacted in the publick view.

3. *By ordering concurrent Testimonies as to matter of Fact, that the matter of Fact was not deniable.* That there was such a Person as Christ, that his Miracles were stupendous, that his Doctrine did not incline to Sedition, that he affected not Worldly Applause, that he did suffer at *Jerusalem*, was acknowledged by all: Not a man among the greatest Enemies of Christians, was found, that denied the matter of Fact. And this great truth, that Christ is the *Messiah* and Redeemer, hath been, with universal consent, owned by all the Professors of Christianity throughout the World: Whatever Bickerings there have been among them about some particular Doctrines, they all centred in that Truth of Christ's being the Redeemer. The first publication of this Doctrine was sealed by a thousand Miracles, and so illustrious, that he was an utter Stranger to the World that was ignorant of them.

4. *In keeping up some Principles and Opinions in the World to facilitate the belief of this, or render men inexcusable for rejecting of it.* The Incarnation of the Son of God could not be so strange to the World, if we consider the general belief of the *Appearances* † of their Gods among them; that the *Epicureans*, and others, that denied any such Appearances, were counted *Atheists* \*. And *Pythagoras* was esteemed to be one, not of the interior *Genij* and *Lunar Demons*, but one of the higher Gods, who appeared in a Human Body, for the curing and redifying mortal Life †. And himself tells *Abaris* the *Scythian*, that he was *ἀνθρωποειπής*, that he took the flesh of man, that men might not be astonished at him, and in a fright fly from his Instructions. It was not therefore accounted an irrational thing among them, that God should be Incarnate: But indeed the great stumbling block was a crucified God. But had they known the holy and righteous Nature of God, the Malice of sin, the universal Corruption of Human Nature, the first threatening, and the necessity of vindicating the honour of the Law, and clearing the Justice of God; the Notion of his crucifixion would not have appeared so incredible, since they believed the possibility of an Incarnation.

Another Principle was that universal One of *Sacrifices for Expiation*, and rendering God propitious to man, and was practised among all Nations. I remember not any wherein this Custom did not prevail; for it did even among those People where the *Jews*, as being no trading Nation, had not any Commerce; and also in *America*, found out in these latter Ages. It was not a Law of Nature, no man can find any such thing written in his own heart, but a Tradition from *Adam*. Now that among the loss of so many other Doctrines, that were handed down from *Adam* to his immediate Posterity, as in particular that of the *Seed of the Woman*, which one would think a necessary Appendix to that of Sacrificing; This latter should be preserved as a Fragment of an ancient Tradition, seems to be an Act of Divine Wisdom, to prepare men for the entertainment of the Doctrine of the great Sacrifice for the Expiation of the sin of the World. And as the *Apostle* forms his Argument from the Jewish Sacrifices in the *Epistle* to the *Hebrews*, for the convincing them of the end of the death of Christ, so did the Ancient Fathers make use of this practice of the *Heathen*, to convince them of the same Doctrine.

5. The wisdom of God appeared in the time and circumstances of the first solemn publication of the Gospel by the *Apostles* at *Jerusalem*. The Relation you may read in *Acts* 2. from verse 1. to the 12th. The Spirit was given to the *Apostles* on the day of *Pentecost*; a time wherein there were multitudes of *Jews* from all Nations, not only near, but remote, that heard the great things of God spoken in the several Languages of those Nations, where their Habitations were fixed; and that by twelve illiterate men, that two

or

† *Enchiridion*

\* *Dionis. Halicarn. Antiqu. lib. 2. p. 129.*

† *Iamblich. Vit. Pythag. lib. 1. cap. 5. p. 44. de lib. 2. c. 19. p. 54.*



or three hours before knew no Language but that of their Native Country.

It was the custom of the *Jews*, that dwelt among other Nations, at a distance from *Jerusalem*, to assemble together at *Jerusalem* at the Feast of *Pentecost*: And God pitched upon this Season, that there might be Witnesses of this Miracle in many parts of the World: There were some of every Nation under Heaven; verse 5. that is, of that known part of the World, so saith the Text. Fourteen several Nations are mentioned; and *Profelytes* as well as *Jews* by Birth. They are called *devout men*, men of Conscience, whose testimony would carry weight with it among their Neighbours at their return, because of their Reputation by their Religious Carriage.

Again, this was not heard and seen by some of them at one time, and some at another, by some one hour, by others the next *successively*\*, but *altogether*; in a Solemn Assembly, that the testimony of so many Witnesses at a time, might be more valid, and the truth of the Doctrine appear more illustrious and undeniable. And it must needs be astonishing to them, to hear that Person magnified in so miraculous a manner, who had so lately been condemned by their Countrymen as a Malefactor.

\* Faucheur  
in loc. p. 294.  
295.

Wisdom consists in the *timing* of things. And in this Circumstance doth the wisdom of God appear, in furnishing the Apostles with the Spirit at such a time, and bringing forth such a Miracle, as the gift of Tongues, on a sudden, that every Nation might hear in their own Language, the wonder of Redemption, and as Witnesses at their returns into their own Countreys, report it to others; that the credit they had, in their several Places, might facilitate the belief and entertainment of the Gospel, when the *Apostles*, or others, should arrive to those several Charges and Dioceses appointed for them to preach the Gospel in. Had this Miracle been wrought in the presence only of the Inhabitants of *Judea*, that understood only their own Language, or one or two of the Neighbouring Tongues, it had been counted by them rather a Madness than a Miracle. Or had they understood all the Tongues which they spoke, the news of it had spread no further than the limits of their own Habitations, and had been confin'd within the narrow bounds of the Land of *Judea*: But now it is carried to several remote Nations, where any of those Auditors then assembled had their Residence.

As God chose the time of the *Passeover* for the Death of Christ, that there might be the greatest Number of the Inhabitants of the Country, as Witnesses of the Matter of Fact, the Innocence and Sufferings of Christ, so he chose the time of *Pentecost* for the first publishing the value and end of this Blood to the World.

Thus the *Evangelical Law* was given in a Confluence of People from all Parts and Nations, because it was a *Covenant with all Nations*: And the variety of Languages spoken by a Company of poor *Galileans*, bred up at the Lake of *Tiberias*, and in poor corners of *Canaan*, without the Instructions of men for so great a Skil, might well evidence to the hearers, that God that brought the *Confusion of Languages* first at *Babel*, did only work that Cure of them, and combine all together at *Jerusalem*.

3. The wisdom of God is seen in the *Instruments* he employed in the publishing the Gospel. He did not employ *Philosophers*, but *Fishermen*, used not acquired Arts, but infused wisdom and courage. This Treasure was put into, and preserved in Earthen Vessels, that the Wisdom, as well as the Power of God, might be magnified. The weaker the means are which attain the end, the greater is the skill of the Conductor of them.

Wise Princes choose men of most credit, Interest, Wisdom, and Ability to be Ministers of their Affairs, and Embassadors to others. But what were these that God chose for so great a Work, as the publishing a new Doctrine to the World? What was their quality but mean, what was their Authority, without Interest? What was their Ability, without eminent Parts for so great a Work, but what Divine Grace in a special manner endowed them with? Nay, what



was their disposition to it? as dull and unweildy. Witness the frequent rebukes for their slow-heartedness, from their Master, when he conversed in the Flesh with them. And *One* of the greatest of them, so fond of the *Jewish* Ceremonies and Pharisaical Principles, wherein he had been more than ordinarily principled, that he hated the Christian Religion to extirpation, and the Professors of it to death; by those ways which were out of the rode of Human wisdom, and would be accompted the greatest absurdity to be practis'd by men that have a repute for Discretion, did God advance his Wisdom. 1 Cor. 1. 25. *The foolishness of God is wiser than man.* By this means it was indisputably evidenc'd to unbyallied Minds, that the Doctrine was Divine. It could not rationally be imagined, that Instruments destitute of all Human Advantages, should be able to vanquish the World, confound *Judaism*, overturn *Heathenism*, chase away the *Devils*, strip them of their Temples, alienate the Minds of men from their several Religions, which had been rooted in them by Education, and established by a long succession. It could not, I say, reasonably be imagined to be without a Supernatural Assistance, an heavenly and efficacious working: Whereas, had God taken a Course agreeable to the prudence of Man, and used those that had been furnished with Learning, tip'd with Eloquence, and armed with Human Authority, the Doctrines would have been thought to have been of a Human Invention, and to be some subtle Contrivance for some unworthy and ambitious end: The *nothingness* and weakness of the Instruments manifest them to be conducted by a Divine Power, and declare the Doctrine it self to be from Heaven.

When we see such feeble Instruments proclaiming a Doctrine repugnant to Flesh and Blood, sounding forth a crucified Christ to be believed in, and trusted on, and declaiming against the Religion and Worship, under which the *Roman* Empire had long flourished; exhorting them to the Contempt of the World, preparation for Afflictions, denying themselves, and their own Honours, by the hopes of an unseen reward, things so repugnant to Flesh and Blood. And these Instruments concurring in the same Story, with an admirable Harmony in all parts, and sealing this Doctrine with their Blood; can we upon all this, ascribe this Doctrine to a Human Contrivance, or fix any lower Author of it than the wisdom of Heaven? 'Tis the wisdom of God that carries on his own Designs in methods most suitable to his own Greatness, and different from the Customs and Modes of Men, that less of Humanity, and more of Divinity might appear.

4. The wisdom of God appears in the ways and manner, as well as in the Instruments of its propagation. By ways seemingly contrary. You know how God had sent the *Jews* into Captivity in *Babylon*, and though he struck off their Chains, and restored them to their Country, yet many of them had no mind to leave a Country wherein they had been born and bred. The distance from the place of the Original of their Ancestors, and their affection to the Country wherein they were born, might have occasioned their embracing the Idolatrous Worship of the place. Afterwads the Persecutions of *Antiochus* scatter'd many of the *Jews* for their security into other Nations; yet a great part, and perhaps the greatest, preserved their Religion, and by that were obliged to come every year to *Jerusalem* to Offer, and so were present at the effusion of the Spirit on the day of *Pentecost*, and were witnesses of the miraculous effects of it: Had they not been dispers'd by Persecution, had they not resided in several Countries, and been acquainted with their Languages, the Gospel had not so easily been diffused into several Countreys of the World. The first Persecutions also raised against the Church propagated the Gospel; the scattering of the Disciples enflamed their courage, and dispers'd the Doctrine, according to the Prophecy of *Daniel*, Dan. 12. 4. *Many should run to and fro, and knowledge should be increased.* The slights and hurryings of men should enlarge the Territories of the Gospel. There was not a Tribunal, but the primitive Christians



Christians were cited to; not a horrible Punishment, but was inflicted upon them. Treated they were, as the dregs and offals of Mankind, as the common Enemies of the World; yet the Flames of the *Martyrs* brightned the Doctrine and the Captivity of its Professors, made way for the Throne of its Empire. The imprisonment of the *Ark* was the downfal of *Dagon*. Religion grew stronger by Sufferings, and Christianity taller by Injuries. What can this be ascribed to, but the conduct of a Wisdom superiour to that of Men and Devils, defeating the methods of human and hellish Policy; thereby making the wisdom of this World foolishness with God? 1 Cor. 3. 19.

Fifthly, The Use, I. Of Information. If wisdom be an excellency of the Divine Nature; then

1. *Christ's Deity may hence be asserted.* Wisdom is the emphatical Title of Christ in Scripture, Prov. 8. 12, 13, 31. where *Wisdom* is brought in speaking as a distinct Person; ascribing Counsel, and Understanding, and the Knowledge of witty Inventions to it self. He is called also the power of God, and the wisdom of God\*. And the *Ancients* generally understood that place, Col. 2. 3. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, as an assertion of the Godhead of Christ, in regard of the infiniteness of his knowledge; referring wisdom to his knowledge of Divine things; and knowledge to his understanding of all Human things. But the natural sense of the place seems to be this, that all wisdom and knowledge is displayed by Christ in the Gospel; and the words, *in him*, refer either to Christ, or the mystery of God spoken of, vers. 2. But the Deity of Christ, in regard of infinite Wisdom, may be deduc'd from his Creation of things, and his Government of things; both which are ascribed to him in Scripture. The first ascribed to him, John 1. 3. All things were made by him; and verse 27. Without him was not any thing made, that was made. The second John 5. 22. The Father hath committed all Judgment to the Son; and both put together, Col. 2. 16, 17.

Now since he hath the Government of the World, he hath the Perfections necessary to so great a Work. As the Creation of the World, which is ascribed to him, requires an infinite power, so the Government of the World requires an infinite wisdom. That he hath the knowledge of the hearts of men, was proved in handling the Omniscience of God. That knowledge would be to little purpose without wisdom to order the motions of mens hearts, and conduct all the qualities and actions of Creatures, to such an end as is answerable to a wise Government; we cannot think so great an Imployment can be without an Ability necessary for it. The Government of Men and Angels is a great part of the glory of God; and if God should intrust the greatest part of his Glory in hands unfit for so great a trust, it would be an argument of weakness in God, as it is in men, to pitch upon unfit Instruments for particular Charges: Since God hath therefore committed to him his greatest Glory, the Conduct of all things for the highest end, he hath a wisdom requisite for so great an end, which can be no less than infinite: If then Christ were a finite Person, he would not be capable of an infinite Communication; he could not be a Subject wherein infinite wisdom could be lodged; for the terms finite and infinite are so distant, that they cannot commence one another; finite can never be changed into infinite, no more than infinite can into finite.

2. Hence we may assert, *The right and fitness of God for the Government of the World, as he is the wisest Being.* Among men, those who are excellent in Judgment, are accounted fittest to preside over, and give orders to others; the wisest in a City are most capable to govern a City; or at least, though ignorant men may bear the Title, yet the advice of the soundest and skilfullest Heads should prevail in all publick Affairs: We see in Nature, that the eye guides the body, and the mind directs the eye.

\* Power



\* Amos vii.  
 1. 13.  
 p. 53. 59.

\* Power and Wisdom are the two Arms of Authority: Wisdom knows the end, and directs the means; Power executes the means design'd for such an end. The more splendid and strong those are in any, the more Authority results from thence, for the conduct of others that are of an inferior Orb: Now God being infinitely excellent in both, his ability and right to the management of the World, cannot be suspected; the whole World is but one *Commonwealth*, whereof God is the *Monarch*. Did the Government of the World depend upon the Election of Men and Angels, where could they pitch, or where would they find Perfections capable of so great a work, but in the Supreme Wisdom? His Wisdom hath already been apparent in those Laws, whereby he formed the World into a Civil Society, and the *Israelites* into a *Commonwealth*: The one suited to the Consciences and Reasons of all his Subjects, and the other suited to the *Genius* of that particular Nation, drawn out of the Righteousness of the Moral Law, and applicable to all Cases that might arise among them in their Government; so that *Moses* asserts, that the wisdom apparent in their Laws enacted by God, as their chief Magistrate, would render them famous among other Nations, in regard of their *Wisdom*, as well as their *Righteousness*, *Deut.* 4, 6, 7, 9. Also this perfection doth evidence, that God doth actually govern the World. It would not be a commendable thing for a man, to make a curious Piece of *Clock-work*, and take no care for the orderly *motion* of it. Would God display so much of his Skill in framing the Heaven and Earth, and none in actual guidance of them to their particular and universal ends? Did he lay the Foundation in order, and fit every Stone in the Building, make all things in weight and measure, to let them afterwards run at hap hazard? Would he bring forth his Power to view in the Creation, and let a more glorious perfection lye idle, when it had so large a Field to move in? Infinite wisdom is inconsistent with inactivity. All Prudence doth illustrate itself in untying the hardest knots, and disposing the most difficult Affairs to a happy and successful Issue: All those various Arts and Inventions among men, which lend their assisting hand to one another, and those various Employments, their several *Genius's* lead them to, whereby they support one another's welfare, are Beams and instincts of Divine wisdom in the Government of the World: He that *made all things in wisdom*†, would not leave his works to act and move only according to their own folly, and idly behold them jumble together, and run counter to that end he designed them for; we must not fancy a Divine Wisdom to be destitute of Activity.

† *Psalm* 104. 24

3. Here we may see a ground of *God's patience*. The most impotent persons are the most impatient, when unforeseen Emergencies arise, or at Events expected by them, when their feeble Prudence was not a sufficient match to contend with them, or prevent them. But the wiser any man is, the more he bears with those things which seem to cross his Intentions, because he knows he grasps the whole Affair, and is sure of attaining the end he proposeth to himself; yet as a finite wisdom can have but a finite patience, so an infinite wisdom possesses an infinite patience.

The wise God intends to bring glory to himself, and good to some of his Creatures, out of the greatest evils that can happen in the World: He beholds no exorbitant Afflictions and monstrous Actions, but what he can dispose to a good and glorious end, even to *work together for good to them that love God*\*; and therefore doth not presently fall foul upon the Actors, till he hath wrought out that temporary Glory to himself, and Good to his People which he designs. *The times of Ignorance God winkt at*, till he had brought his Son into the World, and manifested his wisdom in Redemption, and when this was done he presseth men to a *speedy repentance*†; that as, he forebore punishing their Crimes, in order to the displaying his wisdom in the design'd Redemption; so when he had effected it, they must forbear any longer abusing his *Patience*.

\* *Rom.* 8. 28.

† *Acts* 17. 30.

4. Hence



4. Hence appears the *Immutability of God in his Decrees*. He is not destitute of a Power and Strength to change his own Purposes; but his Infinite Perfection of *Wisdom* is a bar to his laying aside his Eternal Resolves, and forming new ones; *Isa. 46. 10.* He resolves *the end from the beginning*, and *his counsel stands*; stands immovable, because it is Counsel. 'Tis an impotent Counsel, that is subject to a daily thwarting itself. Inconstant Persons are accounted by Men, destitute of a due measure of Prudence. If God change his Mind, 'tis either for the better or the worse; if for the better, he was not wise in his former Purpose; if for the worse, he is not wise in his present Resolve. No alteration can be without a reflection of Weakness upon the former or present determination. God must either cease to be as Wise as he was before, or begin to be Wiser than he was before the change; which to think or imagine is to deny a Deity. If any Man change his Resolution, he is apprehensive of a flaw in his former Purpose, and finds an Inconvenience in it, which moves him to such a change; which must be either for want of fore-sight in himself, or want of a due consideration of the object of his Counsel: Neither of which can be imagined of God without a denial of the Deity. No, there are no blot and blemishes in his Purposes and Promises. Repentance indeed is an act of Wisdom in the Creature; but it presupposeth Folly in his former Actions, which is inconsistent with Infinite Perfection. Men are often too rash in Promising; and therefore what they promise in haste, they perform at leisure, or not at all: They consider not before they Vow, and make After-enquiries, whether they had best stand to it.

The *only wise God* need not any After-game: As he is Sovereignly Wise, he sees no cause of reversing any thing, and wants not expedients for his own Purpose; and as he is Infinitely Powerful, he hath no Superiour to hinder him from executing his Will, and making his People enjoy the effects of his *Wisdom*. If he had a recollection of Thoughts (as Man hath) and saw a necessity to mend them, he were not Infinitely Wise in his first Decrees. As in Creation, he looked back upon the several Pieces of that goodly Frame he had erected, and saw them so exact, that he did not take up his Pensil again to mend any Particle of the first Draught; so his Promises are made with such Infinite Wisdom and Judgment, that what he writes is Irreversible and for Ever, as the Decrees of the *Medes and Persians*. All the words of God are Eternal, because they are the Births of *Righteousness* and *Judgment*, *Hos. 2. 19.* *I will betroth thee to me for ever, in Righteousness and Judgment.* He is not of a wavering and sitting Discretion: If he *Threatens*, he wisely considers what he Threatens; if he *Promises*, he wisely considers what he Promises, and therefore is Immutable in both.

5. Hence it follows, that *God is a fit Object for our Trust and Confidence*. For God being Infinitely Wise, when he Promises any thing, he sees every thing which may hinder, and every thing which may promote the execution of it, so that he cannot discover any thing afterwards, that may move him to take up After-thoughts: He hath more Wisdom than to promise any thing hand over head, or any thing which he knows he cannot accomplish. Though God, as *True*, be the Object of our Trust; yet God, as *Wise*, is the Foundation of our Trust. We trust him in his Promise; the Promise was made by Mercy, and 'tis performed by Truth; but Wisdom conducts all Means to the accomplishment of it. There are many Men, whose Honesty we can confide in, but whose Discretion we are diffident of: But there is no defect either of the one or the other, which may scare us from depending upon God in our concerns. The words of *Man's wisdom* the *Apostle* entitles *Enticing*, *1 Cor. 2. 4.* in opposition to the words of *God's wisdom*, which are firm, stable, and undeniable demonstrations. As the Power of God is an encouragement of Trust, because he is able to effect; so the Wisdom of God comes into the rank of those Attributes which support our Faith. To put a Confidence in him, we must be persuaded, not only that he is Ignorant of nothing in the World, but that he is Wise to manage the whole course of Nature, and dispose of all his Creatures, for the bringing his Purposes and his Promises to their designed perfection.



## A Discourse upon the

6. Hence appears the necessity of a publick review of the Management of the World, and of a Day of Judgment. As a Day of Judgment may be interr'd from many Attribute of God; as his Sovereignty, Justice, Omniscience, &c. so among the rest from this of Wisdom. How much of this Perfection will lie unvail'd and obscure, if the Sins of Men be not brought to view, whereby the ordering the unrighteous Actions of Men, by his directing and over-ruling Hand of Providence, in subserviency to his own Purposes and his Peoples good, may appear in all its glory? Without such a publick Review, this part of Wisdom will not be clearly visible; how those Actions, which had a vile foundation in the Hearts and designs of Men, and were formed there to gratifie some base Lust, Ambition, and Covetousness, &c. were by a secret Wisdom presiding over them, conducted to amazing Ends.

'Tis a part of Divine Wisdom to right it self, and convince Men of the reasonableness of its Laws, and the unreasonableness of their Contradictions to it. The execution of the Sentence, is an act of Justice; but the conviction of the reasonableness of the Sentence, is an act of Wisdom, clearing up the Righteousness of the proceeding; and this precedes, and the other follows. Jude 15. *To convince all that are ungodly, of all their ungodly deeds.* That Wisdom which contrived satisfaction, as well as that Justice which required it, is concerned in righting the Law, which was enacted by it. The Wisdom of a Sovereign Law-giver is engaged not to see his Law villified and trampled on, and exposed to the Lusts and Affronts of Men, without being concerned in vindicating the Honour of it. It would appear a Folly to enact and publish it, if there were not a Resolution to right and execute it.

The Wisdom of God can no more associate Iniquity and Happiness together, than the Justice of God can separate Iniquity from Punishment. It would be defective, if it did always tamely bear the Insolences of Offenders, without a time of remark of their Crimes, and a Justification of the Precept rebelliously spurn'd at. He would be Unwise, if he were Unjust; Unrighteousness hath no better a Title in Scripture, than that of Folly. 'Tis no part of Wisdom, to give birth to those Laws which he will always behold ineffectual, and neither vindicate his Law by a due execution of the Penalty, nor right his own Authority, condemn'd in the violation of his Law, by a just Revenge. Besides, What Wisdom would it be for the Sovereign Judge, to lodge such a Spokesman for himself, as Conscience in the Soul of Man, if it should be alway sound speaking, and at length be found false in all that it speaks? There is therefore an apparent prospect of the Day of Account, from the consideration of this Perfection of the Divine Nature.

7. Hence we have a ground for a mighty Reverence and Veneration of the Divine Majesty. Who can contemplate the Sparklings of this Perfection in the variety of the Works of his hands, and the exact Government of all his Creatures, without a rais'd Admiration of the Excellency of his Being, and a falling flat before him, in a posture of Reverence to so great a Being? Can we behold so great a mass of Matter, digested into several Forms, so exact a Harmony and Temperament in all the Creatures, the proportions of Numbers and Measures, and one Creature answering the Ends and Designs of another, the distinct Beauties of all, the perpetual Motion of all things without checking one another; the variety of the Nature of things, and all acting according to their Nature with an admirable Agreement; and altogether, like differing strings upon an Instrument, emitting divers Sounds, but all reduc'd to order in one delightful Lesson. I say, Can we behold all this without Admiring and Adoring the Divine Wisdom, which appears in all?

And from the Consideration of this, let us pass to the Consideration of his Wisdom in Redemption; in reconciling divided Interests, untying Hard-knots, drawing one contrary out of another; and we must needs acknowledge that the Wisdom of all the Men on Earth, and Angels in Heaven, is worse than Nothing, and Vanity in comparison of this vast Ocean. And as we have a greater esteem

for



for those that invent some excellent Artificial Engines; what Reverence ought we to have for him that hath stamp'd an unimitable *Wisdom* upon all his Works? Nature orders us to give Honour to our Superiours in Knowledge, and conide in their Counsels; but none ought to be Reverenc'd as much as God, since none equals him in *Wisdom*.

8. If God be Infinitely Wise, it shows us the necessity of our Address to him, and Invocation of his Name. We are subject to Mistakes, and often overseen; we are not able rightly to Counsel our selves. In some cases all Creatures are too short-sighted to apprehend them, and too ignorant to give Advice proper for them, and to contrive Remedies for their ease; but with the Lord there is Counsel, *Jer. 32. 19. He is great in counsel, and mighty in working*; great in Counsel to advise us, mighty in Working to assist us. We know not how to effect a design, or prevent an expected Evil. We have an Infinite *Wisdom* to go to, that is every way skilful to manage any business we desire, to avert any Evil we fear, to accomplish any thing we commit into his hands. When we know not what to resolve, he hath a Counsel to guide us; *Psal 73. 24. He is not more Powerful to effect what is needful, than Wise to direct what is fitting.* All Men stand in need of the Help of God, as one Man stands in need of the assistance of other Men, and will not do any thing without Advice; and he that takes Advice, deserves the Title of a *Wise man*, as well as he that gives Advice. But no Man needs so much the Advice of another Man, as all Men need the Counsel and Assistance of God: Neither is any mans Wit and Wisdom so far inferior to the Prudence and Ability of an Angel, as the Wisdom of the wisest Man and the most sharp-sighted Angel, is inferior to the Infinite *Wisdom* of God. We see therefore, that it is best for us to go to the *Fountain*, and not content our selves with the Streams; to beg Advice from a *Wisdom* that is Infinite and Intallible, rather than from that which is Finite and Fallible.

Use II. If *Wisdom* be the Perfection of the Divine Majesty, *How prodigious is the Contempt of it in the World?*

In General.

All Sin strikes at this Attribute, and is in one part or other a degrading of it: The first Sin directed its Venom against this. As the Devils endeavoured to equal their Creator in Power; so Man endeavoured to equal him in Wisdom: Both indeed scorn'd to be rul'd by his Order; but Man evidently exalted himself against the *Wisdom* of God, and aspired to be a sharer with him in his Infinite Knowledge: Would not let him be the *only wise God*, but cherished an ambition to be his Partner. Just as if a Beam were able to imagine, it might be as bright as the Sun; or a Spark fancy, it could be as full fraught with Heat, as the whole Element of Fire. Man would not submit to the Infinite *Wisdom* of God in the prohibition of one single *Fruit* in the *Garden*, when by the right of his Sovereign Authority, he might have granted him only the use of one. All Presumptuous sins are of this nature, they are therefore called *Reproaches of God*, *Numb. 15. 30. the Soul that doth ought presumptuously, reproacheth the Lord.* All Reproaches are either for *Natural, Moral, or Intellectual* defects. All Reproaches of God, must imply either a Weakness or Unrighteousness in God. If Unrighteousness, his Holiness is denied; if Weakness, his Wisdom is blemished.

In General, All Sin strikes at this Perfection two ways.

1. *As it defaceth the wise workmanship of God.* Every Sin is a deforming and blemishing our own Souls, which, as they are the prime Creatures in the lower World, so they have greater Characters of *Divine Wisdom* in the Fabrick of them: But this Image of God is ruin'd and broken by Sin. Though the spoiling of it be a scorn of his Holiness, 'tis also an affront to his *Wisdom*; for though his Power was the cause of the production of so fair a Piece, yet his Wisdom was the guide of his Power, and his Holiness the Pattern whereby he wrought it: His Power effected it, and his Holiness was exemplified in it; but his Wisdom contriv'd it.



If a Man had a curious Clock or Watch, which had cost him many years pains and the strength of his Skill to frame it; for another, after he had seen and considered it, to trample upon it, and crush it in pieces, would argue a contempt of the *Artificers Skill*. God hath shewn infinite Art in the Creation of Man; but Sin unbeautifies Man, and ravisheth his Excellency. It cuts and flasbeth the Image of God stamp'd by Divine Wisdom, as though it were an Object only of Scorn and Contempt. The Sinner in every Sin acts, as if he intended to put himself in a better posture, and in a fairer dress, than the *Wisdom* of God hath put him in by Creation.

2. *In the slighting his Laws.* The Laws of God are highly Rational; they are drawn from the depths of the Divine Understanding, wherein there is no unclowness, and no defect. As his Understanding apprehends all things in their true Reason; so his Will enjoins all things for worthy and wise Ends: His Laws are contriv'd by his Wisdom for the happiness of Man, whose Happiness, and the Methods to it, he understands better than Men or Angels can do. His Laws being the Orders of the Wisest Understanding, every breach of his Law is a flying in the Face of his *Wisdom*. All Human Laws, though they are enforced by Sovereign Authority; yet they are, or ought to be in the composing of them, founded upon Reason, and should be particular applications of the Law of Nature, to this or that particular emergency. The Laws of God then, who is *summa ratio*, are the birth of the truest Reason; though the Reason of every one of them may not be so clear to us.

Every Law, though it consists in an act of the Will, yet doth presuppose an act of the Understanding. The act of the *Divine Understanding* in framing the Law, must be supposed to precede the act of his Will, in commanding the Observance of that Law. So every Sin against the Law, is not only against the Will of God commanding, but the Reason of God contriving; and a cleaving to our own Reason, rather than the Understanding or Mind of God: As if God had mistaken in making his Law, and we had more understanding to frame a better, and more conducing to our happiness: As if God were not Wise enough to govern us, and prescribe what we should do, and what we should avoid; as if he designed not our welfare, but our misfortune.

Whereas the Precepts of God are not tyrannical Edicts, or Acts of meer Will, but the fruits of Counsel; and therefore every breach of them is a real declamation against his Discretion and Judgment, and preferring our own Imaginations, or the Suggestions of the *Devil*, as our Rule, before the Results of Divine Counsel: While we acknowledge him Wise in our Opinion, we speak him Foolish by our Practice; when instead of being guided by him, we will guide our selves. No Man will question, but it is a controuling *Divine Wisdom*, to make Alterations in his Precepts; dogmatically, either to add some of their own, or expunge any of his: And is it not a Crime of the like reflection to alter them Practically? When we will observe one part of the Law, and not another part; but pick and choose where we please our selves, as our Humors and Carnal Interest prompts us. It is to charge that part of the Law with Folly, which we refuse to conform unto.

The more cunning any Man is in Sin, the more his sin is against *Divine Wisdom*, as if he thought to out-wit God. He that receives the Promises of God, and the *Testimony of Christ*, sets to his Seal, that God is true, John 3.33. By the like strength of Argument it will undeniably follow, That he that refuseth Obedience to his Precept, sets to his Seal that God is foolish. Were they not Rational, God would not enjoin them; and if they are Rational, we are Enemies to Infinite Wisdom, by not complying with them. If Infinite Prudence hath made the Law, why is not every part of it observed; if it were not made with the best Wisdom, why is any part of it observed? If the defacing his Image be any Sin, as being a defaming his *Wisdom* in Creation; the breaking his Law is no less a Sin, as being a disgracing his *Wisdom* in his Administration. 'Tis upon this account, likewise, that the *Scripture* so often counts Sinners *Fools*, since it is certainly inexcusable Folly, to contradict undeniable and infallible *Wisdom*; yet this is done in the least Sin:



Sin: And as he that breaks one title of the Law, is deservedly accounted guilty of the breach of the whole, James 2. 10. so he that *despises* the least stamp of Wisdom in the minutest part of the Law, is deservedly counted as a Contemner of it, in the frame of the whole Statute-Book.

But in Particular, the Wisdom of God is affronted and Invaded,

1. By introducing new Rules and Modes of Worship, different from Divine Institutions. Is not this a manifest reflection on this Perfection of God, as though he had not been Wise enough to provide for his own Honour, and model his own Service; but stood in need of our directions, and the *caprichio's* of our Brains? Some have observed, that it is a greater Sin in Worship to do what we should not, than to omit what we should perform †. The one seems to be out of weakness, because of the high exactness of the Law; and the other out of impudence, accusing the Wisdom of God of Imperfection, and controuling it in its Institutions. At best, it seems to be an Imputation of Human Baseness to the Supreme Sovereign; as if he had been ashamed to prescribe all that was necessary to his own Honour, but had left something to the Ingenuity and Gratitude of Men.

† Strong of the Will.

Man has ever since the foolish Conceit of his old Ancestor *Adam*, presumed he could be as Wise as God; and if he who was created *upright* entertain'd such Conceits, much more doth Man now, under a mass of Corruption, so capable to foment them. This hath been the continual practise of Men; not so much to reject what once they had received as Divine, but add something of their own Inventions to it.

The *Heathens* renounced not the Sacrificing of Beasts for the expiation of their Offences (which the Old World had received by Tradition from *Adam*, and the New World, after the Deluge, from *Noah*.) But they had blended that Tradition with Rites of their own, and offered Creatures unclean in themselves, and not fit to be offered to an Infinitely Pure Being; for the distinction of *Clean* and *Unclean*, was as Ancient as *Noah*, Gen. 8. 20. yea before, Gen. 7. 2.

So the *Jews* did not discard what they had received from God, as *Circumcision*, the *Passover*, and *Sacrifices*; but they would mix a heap of *Heathenish* Rites with the Ceremonies of Divine Ordination, and practise things which he had not commanded, as well as things which he had enjoined them. And therefore 'tis observable, that when God taxeth them with this Sin; he doth not say, They brought in those things which he had forbidden into his Worship; but those things which he had not commanded, and had given no order for, to intimate, that they were not to move a step without his Rule; (*Jer. 7. 31. They have built the high places of Tophet, which I commanded them not, nor came it into my heart; and Levit. 10. 1. Nadab's and Abihu's strange Fire was not commanded;*) so charging them with Impudence and Rashness in adding something of their own, after he had revealed to them the manner of his Service, as if they were as Wise as God. So loth is Man to acknowledge the Supremacy of Divine Understanding, and be sensible of his own Ignorance.

So after the divulging of the Gospel, the Corrupters of Religion did not sling off, but preserved the Institutions of God, but painted and patch'd them up with *Pagan* Ceremonies; imposed their own *Dreams* with as much force, as the Revelations of God. Thus hath the *Papacy* turn'd the Simplicity of the Gospel into *Pagan Pomp*, and Religion into Politicks; and revived the Ceremonial Law, and raked some Limbs of it out of the Grave, after the Wisdom of God had rung her Knell, and honourably Inter'd her, and shelter'd the *Heathenish* Superstitions in *Christian Temples*, after the Power of the Gospel had chas'd the *Devils*, with all their Trumpery, from their ancient Habitations.

Whence should this proceed, but from a partial *Atheisme*, and a mean conceit of the *Divine Wisdom*? As though God had not Understanding enough to prescribe the Form of his own Worship; and not Wisdom enough to support it, without the Crutches of *Human Prudence*.



Human Prudence is too low to parallel *Divine Wisdom*; 'tis an incompetent Judge of what is fit for an Infinite Majesty. 'Tis sufficiently seen in the ridiculous and senseless Rites among the *Heathens*; and the Cruel and Devilish ones, etched from them by the *Jews*. What work will Human Wisdom make with Divine Worship, when it will presume to be the Director of it, as a Mate with the *Wisdom* of God? Whence will it take its measures, but from Sense, Humor, and Fancy? As though what is grateful and comely to a depraved Reason, were as beautiful to an unspotted, and Infinite Mind. Do not such tell the World, that they were of Gods Cabinet Council, since they will take upon them to judge, *as well as God*, what is *well pleasing to him*? Where will it have the humility to step, if it hath the presumption to add any one thing to Revealed Modes of Worship? How did God tax the *Israelites* with making *Idols* according to their own understanding? *Hos. 13. 2.* imagining their own Understandings to be of a finer make, and a perfecter Mould than their Creators; and that they had fetched more light from the *Chaos* of their own Brains, than God had from Eternity in his own Nature? How slight will the Excuse be, *God hath not forbidden this, or that*, when God shall silence Men with the Question, *Where, or when did I command this, or that*? There was no Addition to be made under the Law to the meanest Instrument God had appointed in his Service. The *Sacred Perfume* was not to have one Ingredient more put into it, than what God had prescribed in the Composition; nor was any Man upon pain of Death to imitate it; nor would God endure, that Sacrifices should be consum'd with any other *Fire*, than that which came down from Heaven. So tender is God of any Invasions of his Wisdom and Authority. In all things of this Nature, whatsoever *voluntary humility* and respect to God they may be disguised with, there is a swelling of the *fleshy mind* against Infinite Understanding, which the *Apostle* nauseates, *Coloss. 2. 18.*

Such Mixtures have not been blest by God: As God never prosper'd the Mixtures of several kinds of Creatures, to form and multiply a new *Species*, as being a dissatisfaction with his *Wisdom*, as Creator; so he doth not prosper Mixtures in Worship, as being a Conspiracy against his *Wisdom*, as a Law-giver. \* The Destruction of the *Jews*, was judged by some of their Doctors to be, for preferring Human Traditions before the Written Word; which they ground on *Mai. 29. 33.* *Their fear of me was taught by the Precepts of Men.* The *Injunctions* of Men were the Rule of their Worship, and not the Prescripts of my Law.

To conclude, Such as make Alterations in Religion, different from the first Institution, are intolerable Buffle-bodies, that will not let God alone with his own Affairs. Vain Man would be wiser than his Maker, and be dabbling in that which is his sole Prerogative.

2. *In neglecting Means Instituted by God.* When Men have risings of heart against Gods Ordinances, *They reject the counsel of the Lord against themselves, or in themselves, Luke 7. 30. ἡσαντων.* They disannull'd the *Wisdom* of God, the Spring of his Ordinances: All neglects, are disregards of Divine Prescriptions, as impertinent and unavailable to that End for which they were appointed, as not being suited to the common dictates of Reason; sometimes out of a Voluntary humility, such as *Peters* was, when he denied *Christs* condescension to wash his feet, *John 13. 8.* and thereby judged of the comeliness of his Masters intention and action. Such as continually neglect the great Institution of the *Lords Supper* out of a sense of *Unworthiness*, are in the same rank with *Peter*, and do, as well as he, fall under the blame and reproof of Christ.

Men would be saved, and use the Means; but either Means of their own Appointment, or not all the Means of Gods ordering†. They would have Gods Wisdom and Will condescend to theirs, and not theirs conformed to God. As if our blind Judgments were fittest to make the election of the Paths to Happiness. Like *Nazir*, who when he was ordered by the *Prophet*, for the cure of his *Leprosie*, to wash seven times in *Jordan*, would be the *Prophets* Director, and have him touch him with his Hand: As if a Patient sick of a desperate Disease, should Prescribe to his Skillful Physician, what Remedies he should order for his Cure,

\* Vailin.  
The Talmud  
takes notice,  
that the Court  
of Berhany  
was walked  
three years be-  
fore Jerusalem,  
because they pre-  
ferred their  
own words be-  
fore the words  
of the Law.

† Pont. Ag. 3.  
22. 37. 38.



Cure, and make his own infirm Reason, or his Gust and Palate the Rule, rather than the Physicians Skill.

Mens Inquiries are, *Who will shew us any good?* They rather fasten upon any Means, than what God hath ordained. \* We invert the Order *Divine Wisdom* hath established, when we would have God save us in our own way, not in his. † *Durant de Tent. p. 402. 404.* 'Tis the same thing, as if we would have God nourish us without Bread, and cure our Diseases without Medicines, and increase our Wealth without our Industry, and cherish our Souls without his Word and Ordinances. 'Tis to demand of him an alteration of his Methods, and a separation of that which he hath by his Eternal Judgment joyned together. Therefore for a Man to pray to God to save him, when he will not use the Means he hath appointed for Salvation, when he slights the *Word*, which is the Instrument of Salvation, is a Contempt of the *Wisdom* of Divine Institutions.

Also in *Omissions* of Prayer; when we consult not with God upon emergent Occasions, we trust more to our own wisdom than Gods, and imply, that we stand not in need of his Conduct, but have ability to direct our selves, and accomplish our Ends without his guidance. Not seeking God, is by the Prophet tax'd to be a reflection upon this Perfection of God, *Isa. 31. 1, 2. They look not to the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord, &c.* And the like Charge he brings against them, *Hos. 8. 9. They are gone up to Assyria, a wild Ass alone by himself, not consulting God.*

3. *In censuring Gods Revelations and Actions, if they be not according to our Schemes.* When we will not submit to his plain Will, without penetrating into the unrevealed Reason of it, nor adore his Counsels without controuling them; as if we could correct both *Law* and *Gospel*, and frame a better Method of Redemption than that of Gods contriving. Thus Men slighted the *Wisdom* of God in the Gospel, because it did not agree with that *Philosophical* Wisdom and Reason they had suckt in by Education from their Masters †, contrary to their Practice in their Superstitious Worship; where the Oracles they thought Divine, were entertained with Reverence, not with Dispute; and though ambiguous, were not counted ridiculous by the Worshipper. How foolish is Man in this, wherein he would be accounted wise? *Adam* in Innocence was unfit to controul the Doctrine of God, when the Eye of his Reason was clear; and much more are we, since the depravation of our Natures. † 1 Cor. 1 21, 22.

The Revelations of God tower above Reason in its Purity; much more above Reason in its Mud and Earthiness. The Rays of *Divine Wisdom* are too bright for our Human Understandings, much more for our Sinful Understandings. 'Tis base to set up Reason, a Finite principle, against an Infinite Wisdom; much baser to set up a depraved and and purblind Reason, against an All-seeing and holy Wisdom. If we would have a Reason for all that God speaks, and all that God acts; our Wisdom must become Infinite as his, or his Wisdom become Finite as ours.

All the Censures of Gods Revelations arise from some prejudicate Opinions or Traditional Maxims, that have enthroned themselves in our Minds, which are made the Standard whereby to judge of the things of God, and receive or reject them, as they agree with or dissent from those *Principles* ||. Hence it was that the *Philosophers* in the Primitive Times were the greatest Enemies to the Gospel: And the Contempt of *Divine Wisdom*, in making Reason the Supream Judge of Divine Revelation, was the fruitful Mother of the *Hereses* in all Ages springing up in the Church, and especially of that *Socinianism*, that daily insinuates it self into the minds of Men. || Coloss. 2. 8.

This is a wrong to the *Wisdom* of God. He that censures the Words or Actions of another, implies, that he is in his Censure wiser than the Person censured by him. 'Tis as insupportable to determine the Truth of Gods plain Dictates by our Reason, as it is to measure the suitability or unsuitableness of his Actions by the humor of our Will. We may sooner think to span the *Sun*, or grasp a *Star*, or see a *Gnat* swallow a *Leviathan*, than fully understand the Debates of Eternity.



To this we may refer too curious Enquiries into Divine Methods, and *intruding into those things which are not revealed*, Col. ii. 18. It is to affect a Wisdom equal with God, and an Ambition to be of his Cabinet-Council. We are not content to be Creatures, that is, to be every way below God; below him in Wisdom, as well as Power.

4. *In prescribing God methods of Acting.* When we pray for a thing without a due submission to Gods Will; as if we were his Counsellors, yea his Tutors, and not his Subjects, and God were bound to follow our humors, and be swayed according to the Judgment of our Ignorance; when we would have such a Mercy which God thinks not fit to give, or have it in this method, which God designs to convey through another Chanel. Thus we would have the *only wise God* take his measures from our Passions: Such a controuling of God was *Jonahs* Anger about a *Gourd*, *Jonah* 3. 10. *It displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.*

We would direct him how to dispose of us; as though he that had Infinite Wisdom to contrive, and rear the excellent Fabrick of the World, had not Wisdom enough, without our Discretions, to place us in a sphere proper for his own Ends, and the use he intends us in the Universe. All the Speeches of Men, (*Would I had been in such an Office, had such a Charge: Would I had such a Mercy, in such a method, or by such Instruments,*) are Intrenchments upon Gods wise disposal of Affairs.

This imposing upon God is a Hellish disposition, and in Hell we find it. The *Rich man* in Hell, that pretends some Charity for his Brethren on Earth, would direct God a way to prevent their ruine, by sending *one from the dead* to school them, as a more effectual Means than *Moses and the Prophets*, *Luke* 16. 29, 30. 'Tis a Temper also to be found on Earth; what else was the language of *Sauls* saving the *Amalekites Cattle* against the plain Command of God, *1 Sam.* 15. 15. As if God in his Fury had overhot himself, and overlooked his *Altar*, in depriving it of so great a Booty for its Service: As if it were an unwise thing in God, to lose the Prey of so many stately Cattle, that might make the Altar smoke with their Entrails, and serve to expiate the Sins of the People; and therefore he would rectifie that which he thought to be an oversight in God, and so magnifies his own Prudence and Discretion above the Divine.

We will not let God act as he thinks fit, but will be directing him, and *teaching him knowledge*, *Job* 21. 22. As if God were a Statue, an *Idol*, that had *Eyes* and saw not, *Hands*, but acted not; and could be turned as an Image may be, to what quarter of the Heaven we please our selves. The *Wisdom* of God is unbyast; he orders nothing but what is fittest for his End, and we would have our shallow Brains the byas of Gods acting. And will not God resent such an Indignity, as a reflection upon his Wisdom as well as Authority, when we intimate that we have better Heads than he, and that he comes short of us in Understanding?

5. *In Murmuring and Impatience.* One demands a Reason, why he hath this or that Cross? Why he hath been deprived of such a Comfort, lost such a Venture, languisheth under such a Sickness, is tormented with such Pains, oppressed by Tyrannical Neighbours, is unsuccessful in such Designs? In these, and such like, the *Wisdom* of God is questioned and defam'd. All Impatience, is a suspicion, if not a condemnation of the Prudence of Gods Methods, and would make Human Feebleness and Folly the Rule of Gods dealing with his Creatures. This is a presuming to instruct God, and a reproving him for Unreasonableness in his Proceedings, when his dealings with us do not exactly answer our Fancies and Wishes; as if God, who made the World in Wisdom, wanted Skill for the management of his Creatures in it. *Job* 40. 2. *Shall he that contends with the Almighty, instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.* We that are not wise enough to know our selves, and what is needful for us; presume to have Wit enough to guide God in his dealing with us. The *Wisdom* of God rendred *Job* more useful to the World by his Afflictions, in making him a Pattern of *Patience*, than if he had continued him in a confluence of all Worldly Comforts, wherein he



he had been beneficial only in communicating his Morfels to his Poor Neighbours. All Murmuring is a fastening Error upon unerring *Wisdom*.

6. *In Pride and Haughtiness of Spirit.* No Proud man, but sets his Heart as the heart of God, *Ezek. 28. 2, 3.* The *Wisdom* of God hath given to Men divers Offices, set them in divers places; some have more honourable Charges, some meaner. Not to give that respect their Offices and Places call for, is to quarrel with the *Wisdom* of God, and overturn the Rank and Order wherein he hath placed things.

'Tis unfit we should affront God in the disposal of his Creatures, and intimate to him by our Carriage that he had done more wisely in placing another, and that he hath done foolishly in placing this or that Man in such a Charge. Sometimes Men are unworthy the Place they fill; they may be set there in Judgment to themselves and others: But the *Wisdom* of God in his management of things, is to be honoured and regarded.

'Tis an infringing the *Wisdom* of God, when we have a vain Opinion of our selves, and are blind to others. When we think our selves Monarchs, and treat others as Worms or Flies in comparison of us. He would reduce all things to his own honour, perverts the Order of the World, and would constitute another Order than what the *Wisdom* of God hath established; and move them to an End contrary to the intention of God, and charges God with want of Discretion and Skill.

7. *Distrust of Gods Promise is an impeachment of his Wisdom.* A secret Reviling of it, as if he had not taken due consideration before he past his Word; or a suspicion of his Power, as if he could not accomplish his Word. We trust the *Physicians* Skill with our Bodies, and the *Lawyers* Counsel with our Estates; but are loath to rely upon God for the concerns of our Lives. If he be Wise to dispose of us, why do we distrust him? If we distrust him, why do we embrace an opinion of his *Wisdom*?

*Unbelief* also is a contradiction to the *Wisdom* of God in the Gospel, &c. but that I have already handled in a *Discourse of the Nature of Unbelief*.

III. *Use of Comfort.* God hath an *Infinite Wisdom*, to conduct us in our Affairs, rectifie us in our Mistakes, and assist us in our Straits. 'Tis an inestimable priviledge to have a God in Covenant with us; so Wise, to communicate all Good, to prevent all Evil; who hath Infinite ways to bring to pass his gracious Intentions towards us. *How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out? Rom. 11. 33.* His Judgments or Decrees are incomprehensibly Wise, and the ways of effecting them, are as wise as his Resolves effected by them. We can a little search into his Methods of Acting, as we can into his *Wisdom* of Resolving; both his Judgments and Ways are unsearchable.

1. *Comfort in all Straits and Afflictions.* There is a *Wisdom* in inflicting them, and a *Wisdom* in removing them. He is wise to sute his Medicines to the humor of our Disease, though he doth not to the humor of our Wills: He cannot mistake the nature of our Distemper, or the virtue of his own Physick. Like a skillful Physician, he sometime prescribes bitter Potions, and sometimes cheering Cordials, according to the strength of the Malady, and necessity of the Patient to reduce him to health. As nothing comes from him, but what is for our good; so nothing is acted by him in a rash and temerarious way. His *Wisdom* is as Infinite as his Goodness; and as exact in managing, as his Goodness is plentiful in streaming out to us. He understands our Griets, weighs our Necessities, and no Remedies are beyond the reach of his Contrivance. When our feeble Wits are bewildred in a maze, and at the end of their Line for a rescue; the Remedies unknown to us, are not unknown to God. When we know not how



to prevent a Danger, the Wise God hath a *Thousand Blocks* to lay in the way: When we know not how to free our selves from an oppressive Evil, he hath a *Thousand ways* of Relief.

He knows how to *Time our Crosses*, and his *own Blessings*. The heart of a Wise God, as well as the heart of a wise Man, *discerns both time and judgment*, *Eccles. 8. 5.* There is as much Judgment in sending them, as Judgment in removing them. How comfortable is it to think, that our Distresses, as well as our Deliverances, are the fruits of *Infinite Wisdom*? Nothing is done by him too soon or too slow; but in the true point of Time, with all its due circumstances, most conveniently for his glory and our good. How Wise is God, to bring the glory of our Salvation out of the depths of a seeming Ruine, and make the Evils of Affliction subservient to the good of the Afflicted?

2. *In Temptations, his Wisdom is no less employed in permitting them, than in bringing them to a good issue.* His *Wisdom* in leading our Saviour to be Tempted of the Devil, was to fit him for our succour; and his *Wisdom* in suffering us to be Tempted, is to fit us for his own Service, and our Salvation. He makes a *Thorn in the flesh* to be an occasion of a refreshing Grace to the Spirit, and brings forth cordial Grapes from those pricking Brambles, and magnifies his Grace by his *Wisdom*, from the deepest subtilties of Hell. Let *Satans Intentions* be what they will, he can be for him at every turn, to out-wit him in his Stratagems, to baffle him in his Enterprizes; to make him instrumental for our good, where he designs nothing but our hurt. The Lord hath his methods of Deliverance from him, *2 Pet. 2. 9.* *The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of Temptation.*

3. *In Denials, or delays of Answers of Prayer.* He is gracious to Hear; but he is wise to Answer in an *acceptable time*, and succour us in a day proper for our *salvation*, *2 Cor. 6. 2.* We have partial Affections to our selves, *Ignorance* is natural to us, *Rom. 8. 26.* *We ask we know not what*, because we ask out of Ignorance. God grants what he knows, what is fit for him to do, and fit for us to receive; and the exact season wherein it is fittest for him to bestow a Mercy. As God would have us bring forth our Fruit in season, so he will send forth his Mercies in season.

He is wise to sute his Remedy to our Condition, to Time it so, as that we shall have an evident prospect of his *Wisdom* in it; that more of Divine Skill, and less of Human, may appear in the Issue. He is ready at our Call; but he will not Answer, till he see the Season fit to reach out his hand. He is wise to prove our Faith, to humble us under the sense of our own Unworthiness, to whet our Affections, to set a better estimate on the Blessings prayed for, and that he may double the Blessing, as we do our Devotion: But when his *Wisdom* sees us fit to receive his Goodness, he grants what we stand in need of. He is Wise to chuse the fittest Time, and Faithful to give the best Covenant Mercy.

4. *In all Evils threatened to the Church by her Enemies.* He hath Knowledge to fore-see them, and Wisdom to disappoint them; *Job 5. 13.* *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.*

The Church hath the *Wisdom* of God, to enter the Lists with the Policy of Hell. He defeated the *Serpent* in the first Net he laid, and brought a glorious Salvation out of Hells Rubbish; and is yet as Skillful to disappoint the After-game of the *Serpentine-brood*. The *Policy* of Hell, and the Subtilty of the World, are no better than *Folly with God*, *1 Cor. 3. 19.* All Creatures are Fools, as Creatures, in comparison with the Creator. The *Angels* he chargeth with *Folly*, much more us Sinners.

Depraved



Depraved Understandings are not fit Mates for a pure and unblemish'd Mind. *Pharaoh*, with his wisdom, finds a Grave in the Sea; and *Achitophels* Plots are finished in his own murder: He breaks the Enemies by his Power, and orders them by his Skill to be a feast to his People. *Psal.* 74. 14. *Thou brakest the Head of the Leviathan, and gavest him to be meat to the people in the Wilderneck.* The Spoils of the *Egyptians* Carcasses cast upon the shore served the *Israelites* Necessities (or were as Meat to them;) as being a Deliverance the Church might feed upon in all Ages in a *Wilderneck* Condition, to maintain their *Faith*, the vital Principle of the Soul.

There is a *Wisdom* superiour to the subtilties of Men, which laughs at their Follies, and *bath them in derision*, *Psal.* 2. 4. *There is no wisdom or counsel against the Lord, Prov.* 21. 30. You never question the wisdom of an *Artist*, to use his File, when he takes it into his hand: Wicked Instruments are Gods Axes and Files; let him alone, he hath Skill enough to manage them: God hath too much Affection to destroy his People, and Wisdom enough to beautifie them by the worst Tools he uses. He can make all things conspire in a perfect harmony for his own Ends, and his Peoples good, when they see no way to escape a Danger feared, or attain a Blessing wanted.

Use IV.

I. For Exhortation.

1. *Meditate on the Wisdom of God in Creation and Government.* How little do we think of God when we behold his Works? Our Sense dwells upon the surface of Plants and Animals, beholds the variety of their Colours, and the progress in their Motion: Our Reason studies the qualities of them; our Spirits seldom take a slight to the *Divine Wisdom* which framed them. Our Senses engross our Minds from God, that we scarce have a Thought free to bestow upon the Maker of them, but only on the by. The constancy of seeing things that are common, stifles our Admiration of God, due upon the sight of them. How seldom do we raise our Souls as far as Heaven in our views of the Order of the World, the Revolutions of the Seasons, the Natures of the Creatures that are common among us, and the mutual Assistances they give to each other? Since God hath manifested himself in them, to neglect the Consideration of them, is to neglect the Manifestation of God, and the way whereby he hath transmitted something of his Perfections to our Understanding. It renders Men *inexcusably guilty* of not glorifying of God, *Rom.* 1. 19, 20. We can never neglect the meditation of the Creatures, without a blemish cast upon the Creators Wisdom. As every River can conduct us to the Sea; so every Creature points us to an Ocean of *Infinite Wisdom*. Not the minutest of them, but rich tracts of this may be observed in them, and a due sense of God result from them. They are exposed to our view, that something of God may be lodged in our Minds; that as our Bodies extract their quintessence for our Nourishment, so our Minds may extract a quintessence for the Makers Praise.

Though God is principally to be Praised in and for Christ; yet as Grace doth not raze out the Law of Nature, so the operations of Grace put not the dictates of Nature to silence, nor suspend the Homage due to God upon our inspection of his Works. God hath given full Testimonies of this Perfection in the Heavenly Bodies, dispersing their Light, and distributing their Influences to every part of the World: In framing Men into Societies, giving them various Dispositions, for the preservation of Governments; making some Wise for Counsel, others Martial for Action; changing Old *Empires*, and raising New. Which way soever we cast our Eyes, we shall find frequent occasions to cry out, *Oh the depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, Rom.* 11. 33.



To this purpose, we must not only look upon the bulk and outside of his Works, but consider from what Principles they were raised, in what order disposed, and the exact Symmetry and proportion of their parts. When a Man comes into a City or Temple, and only considers the surface of the Buildings, they will amaze his Sense, but not better his Understanding; unless he considers the Methods of the Work, and the Art whereby it was erected.

1. *This was an End for which they were created.* God did not make the World for Mans use only, but chiefly for his own Glory; for Mans use to enjoy his Creatures, and for his own Glory to be acknowledged in his Creatures, that we may consider his Art in framing them, and his Skill in disposing them; and not only gaze upon the Glass without considering the Image it represents, and acquainting our selves whose Image it is. The Creatures were not made for themselves, but for the service of the Creator and the service of Man. Man was not made for himself, but for the Service of the Lord that created him. He is to consider the Beauty of the Creation, that he may thereby glorify the Creator. He knows in part their excellency; the Creatures themselves do not. If therefore Man be idle and unobservant of them, he deprives God of the glory of his *Wisdom*, which he should have by his Creatures.

The Inferiour Creatures themselves cannot observe it. If Man regard it not, what becomes of it; his Glory can only be handed to him by Man. The other Creatures cannot be Active Instruments of his Glory, because they know not themselves, and therefore cannot render him an active Praise. Man is therefore bound to praise God for himself, and for all his Creatures; because he only knows himself, and the Perfections of the Creatures, and the Author both of himself and them.

God Created such Variety, to make a Report of himself to us; we are to receive the Report, and to reflect it back to him. To what purpose did he make so many things, not necessary, for the support and pleasure of our Lives, but that we should behold him in them, as well as in the other?

We cannot behold the *Wisdom* of God in his own Essence and Eternal *Idea's*, but by the reflection of it in the Creatures: As we cannot steadily behold the Sun with our Eye, but either through a Glass, or by reflection of the Image of it in the Water. God would have us meditate on his Perfections; he therefore chose the same Day wherein he reviewed his Work, and rested from it, to be celebrated by Man for the contemplation of him, *Gen. 2. 2, 3.* that we should follow his Example, and rejoice as himself did, in the frequent reviews of his *Wisdom* and Goodness in them. In vain would the Creatures afford Matter for this study, if they were wholly neglected.

God offers something to our Consideration in every Creature: Shall the Beams of God shine round about us, and strike our Eyes, and not affect our Minds? Shall we be like Ignorant Children, that view the Pictures, or point to the Letters in a Book without any sense and meaning? How shall God have the homage due to him from his Works, if Man hath no care to observe them? The 148 *Psalms* is an Exhortation to this. The view of them should often extract from us a wonder of the like nature of that of *Dauids, Ps. 104. 24. Oh Lord, how wonderful are thy Works, in wisdom hast thou made them all.* The World was not Created to be forgotten, nor Man created to be unobservant of it.

2. *If we observe not the Wisdom of God in the views of the Creatures, we do no more than Brutes.* To look upon the Works of God in the World, is no higher an act than meer Animals perform. The Glories of Heaven, and Beauties of the Earth, are visible to the sense of Beasts and Birds. A Brute beholds the motion of a Man, as it may see the Wheels of a Clock, but understands not the inward Springs of Motion; the End for which we move, or the Soul that acts us

in



in our motion; much less that Invisible Power which presides over the Creatures, and conducts their motion. If a Man do no more than this, he goes not a step beyond a Brutish Nature, and may very well acknowledge himself with *Asaph*, a foolish and ignorant *Beast before God*; *Psal. 73. 22.* The World is viewed by Beasts, but the Author of it to be contemplated by Man. Since we are in a higher rank than Beasts, we owe a greater Debt than Beasts; not only to enjoy the Creatures, as they do, but behold God in the Creatures, which they cannot do.

The Contemplation of the Reason of God in his Works, is a noble and suitable employment for a Rational Creature: We have not only Sense to perceive them, but Souls to mind them. The Soul is not to be without its operation: Where the operation of Sense ends, the work of the Soul ought to begin. We travel over them by our Senses, as Brutes; but we must pierce further by our Understandings, as Men, and perceive and praise him that lies Invisible, in his visible Manufactures. Our Senses are given us as Servants to the Soul, and our Souls bestowed upon us for the knowledge and praise of their and our Common Creator.

3. *This would be a means to increase our Humility.* We should then flag our Wings and vail our Sails, and acknowledge our own Wisdom to be as a drop to the Ocean, and a Shadow to the Sun. We should have mean thoughts of the Nothingness of our Reason, when we consider the sublimity of the *Divine Wisdom*. Who can seriously consider the Sparks of Infinite Skill in the Creature, without falling down at the feet of the Divine Majesty, and acknowledging himself a dark and foolish Creature, *Psal. 8. 4, 5.* When the Psalmist considered the Heavens, the Moon and Stars, and Gods ordination and disposal of them, the use that results from it is, *What is Man, that thou art mindful of him?* We should no more think to mate him in Prudence, or set up the spark of our Reason to vye with the Sun. Our Reason would more willingly submit to the Revelation, when the Characters of *Divine Wisdom* are stamp'd upon it, when we find his *Wisdom* in Creation incomprehensible to us.

4. *It would help us in our acknowledgments of God, for his Goodness to us.* When we behold the *Wisdom* of God in Creatures below us, and how ignorant they are of what they possess. It will cause us to reflect upon the deeper Impressions of Wisdom in the frame of our own Bodies and Souls, an excellency far superiour to theirs; this would make us admire the magnificence of his Wisdom and Goodness, and sound forth his Praise for advancing us in dignity above other Works of his hands, and stamping on us by Infinite Art, a Nobler Image of himself.

And by such a Comparison of our selves with the Creatures below us, we should be induced to act excellently, according to the nature of our Souls; not brutishly, according to the nature of the Creatures God hath put under our feet.

5. *By the Contemplation of the Creatures, we may receive some assistance in clearing our knowledge in the Wisdom of Redemption.* Though they cannot of themselves inform us of it; yet since God hath revealed his Redeeming Grace, they can illustrate some particulars of it to us. Hence the Scripture makes use of the Creatures, to set forth things of a higher orb to us: Our Saviour is called a Sun, a Vine, and a Lion; the Spirit likened to a Dove, Fire, and Water. The Union of Christ and his Church, is set forth by the Marriage Union of Adam and Eve.

God hath placed in Corporeal things the Images of Spiritual, and wrapped up in his Creating *Wisdom* the representations of his Redeeming Grace; Whence some call the Creatures, *Natural Types* of what was to be transacted in a new formation of the World, and *Allusions* to what God intended in and by Christ.



6. The Meditation of Gods Wisdom in the Creatures, *is in part a beginning of Heaven upon Earth.* No doubt but there will be a perfect opening of the Model of *Divine Wisdom.* Heaven is for clearing what is now obscure, and a full discovering of what seems at present intricate. *Psal. 36. 9. In his light shall we see light:* All the Light in Creation, Government, and Redemption. The *Wisdom* of God in the *New Heavens*, and the *New Earth*, would be to little purpose, if that also were not to be regarded by the Inhabitants of them. As the Saints are to be restored to the state of *Adam* and higher; so they are to be restored to the employment of *Adam*, and higher: But his employment, was to *behold God in the Creatures.* The World was so soon depraved, that God had but little joy in, and Man but little knowledge of his Works.

And since the *Wisdom* of God in Creation is so little seen by our Ignorance here, would not God lose much of the glory of it, if the glorified Souls should lose the understanding of it above? When their Darkness shall be expelled, and their Advantages improved; when the Eye that *Adam* lost, shall be fully restored, and with a greater clearness; when the Creature shall be restored to its true End, and Reason to its *true Perfection*\*; when the Fountains of the depths of Nature and Government shall be opened, Knowledge shall increase, and according to the increase of our Knowledge, shall the admiration of *Divine Wisdom* increase also.

The *Wisdom* of God in Creation, was not surely intended to lie wholly unobserved in the greatest part of it; but since there was so little time for the full observation of it, there will be a time wherein the *Wisdom* of God shall enjoy a resurrection, and be fully contemplated by his understanding and glorified Creature.

II. Exhortation. *Study and admire the Wisdom of God in Redemption.* This is the Duty of all Christians. We are not called to understand the great depth of *Philosophy*; we are not called to a skill in the Intricacies of Civil Government, or understand all the methods of Physick: but we are called to be Christians, that is, Studiers of *Divine Evangelical Wisdom.* There are first Principles to be learned; but not those Principles to be rested in, without a further progress. *Heb. 6. 1. Therefore leaving the principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection.* Duties must be practised, but knowledge is not to be neglected. The study of Gospel Mysteries, the harmony of Divine Truths, the sparkling of Divine Wisdom, in their mutual combination to the great ends of Gods Glory and Mans Salvation, is an Incentive to Duty, a Spur to Worship, and particularly to the greatest and highest part of Worship, that part which shall remain in Heaven; the Admiration and Praise of God, and Delight in him. If we acquaint not our selves with the Impressions of the glory of *Divine Wisdom* in it, we shall not much regard it as worthy our observance in regard of that Duty.

The Gospel is a Mystery; and as a Mystery hath something Great and Magnificent in it, worthy of our daily inspection; we shall find fresh Springs of New wonders, which we shall be invited to adore with a Religious Astonishment. It will both raise and satisfy our Longings. Who can come to the depths of *God manifested in the flesh*? How amazing is it, and unworthy of a slight thought, that the Death of the Son of God should purchase the happy Immortality of a Sinful Creature, and the glory of a Rebel be wrought by the Ignominy of so great a Person? That our Mediator, should have a Nature whereby to Covenant with his Father, and a Nature whereby to be a Surety for the Creature? How admirable is it, that the Fallen Creature should receive an advantage by the Forfeiture of his Happiness? How Mysterious is it, that the Son of God should bow down to Death upon a Cross, for the satisfaction of Justice; and rise Triumphantly out of the Grave, as a declaration, that Justice was contented and satisfied? That he should be exalted to Heaven, to Intercede for us; and at last return into the World, to receive us, and invest us with a Glory for ever with himself?

Are

\* Rom. 8. 21,  
22.



Are these things worthy of a Careless regard, or a Blockish amazement? What Understanding can pierce into the depths of the Divine Doctrine of the Incarnation and Birth of Christ; the indissoluble Union of the *two* Natures? What Capacity is able to measure the miracles of that *Wisdom*, found in the whole Design and Scheme of the Gospel? Doth it not merit then to be the Object of our daily Meditation? How comes it to pass then, that we are so little curious to concern our Thoughts in those Wonders, that we scarce taste or sip of these Delicacies? That we busie our selves in Trifles, and consider what we shall eat, and in what fashion we shall be drest; please our selves with the ingeniousness of a Lace or Feather; admire a Moth-eaten Manuscript, or some Half-worn piece of Antiquity; and think our time ill-spent in the contemplating and celebrating that wherein God hath busied himself, and Eternity is design'd for the perpetual expressions of?

How Inquisitive are the Blessed *Angels*; with what vigour do they renew their daily Contemplations of it, and receive a fresh Contentment from it; still learning, and still enquiring? *1 Pet. 1. 12.* their Eye is never off the *Mercy Seat*; they strive to see the bottom of it, and employ all the Understanding they have to conceive the Wonders of it. Shall the *Angels* be raviht with it, and bend themselves down to study it, who have but little interest in it in comparison of us, for whom it was both contrived and dispensed? And shall not our Pains be greater for this *hidden Treasure*? Is not that worthy the study of a Rational Creature, that is worthy the study of the Angelical? There must indeed be Pains, 'tis express'd by *Digging*, *Prov. 2. 4.* A lazy Arm will not sink to the depth of a Mine. The neglect of Meditating on it is inexcusable, since it hath the Title and Character of the *Wisdom* of God.

The Ancient *Prophets* searched into it, when it was folded up in *Shadows*, when they saw only the fringes of *Wisdoms* Garment\*; and shall not we, since the *Sun* hath mounted up in our Horizon, and sensibly scattered the light of the knowledge of this and the other Perfections of God? As the *Jewish Sabbath* was appointed to celebrate the Perfections of God, discovered in Creation; so is the *Christian Sabbath* appointed to meditate on, and bless God for the discovery of his Perfections in *Redemption*. Let us therefore receive it according to its worth; let it be our only Rule to walk by. 'Tis worthy to be valued above all other Counsels; and we should never think of it without the *Doxology* of the *Apostle*, *To the only wise God be glory through Jesus Christ, for ever*; that our Speculations may end in affectionate Admirations, and Thankgivings, for that which is so full of Wonders! What a little prospect should we have had of God, and the Happiness of Men, had not his Wisdom and Goodness revealed these things to us? The *Gospel* is a marvellous Light, and should not be regarded with a stupid Ignorance, and pursued with a duller Practice.

3. Exhortation, *Let none of us be proud of, or trust in our own wisdom.* Man by affecting Wisdom out of the way of God, got a crack in his Head, which hath continued *Five thousand years* and upwards; and ever sin our own wisdom and knowledge hath perverted us, *Isai. 47. 10.* To be guided by this, is to be under the conduct of a blind Leader, and follow a Traytor and Enemy to God and our Selves. Mans Prudence often proves hurtful to him: He often accomplisheth his ruine, while he designs his establishment; and finds his Fall, where he thought to settle his Fortune: Such bad Eyes hath Human wisdom often in its own Affairs. Those that have been heightened with a conceit of their own Cunning, have at last proved the greatest Fools. God delights to make *foolish the wisdom of this world*, *1 Cor. 1. 20.*

Thus God writ Folly upon the crafty Brains of *Achitophel*, and Simplicity upon the subtil Projects of *Herod* against our Saviour; and the *Devil*, the Prince of Carnal Wisdom, was besold into a furthering our Redemption by his own Projects to hinder it. Carnal Policy, against the Prescripts of *Divine Wisdom*, never



never prospers: 'Tis like an *Ignis fatuus*, which leads Men out of the way of Duty, and out of the way of Security, and perverts them into the Mine, and dangerous *Precipices*.

When *Jeroboam* would coyn a Religion to serve his Interest of State, he tore up the Foundations both of his Kingdom and Family. The way the *Jews* took to prevent a fresh Invasion of the *Romans*, by the Crucifying *Christ*, brought the Judgment more swift upon them†. There is no Man ruin'd here, or damn'd hereafter, but by his own wisdom and will. *Prov. 3. 5, 7. The fear of the Lord, and departure from evil, are inconsistent with an overweening conceit of our own Wisdom; and leaning to our own understanding, is inconsistent with a trusting in the Lord with all our hearts.* 'Tis as much a Deifying our selves, to trust to our own wit, as it is a Deifying the Creature to affect or confide in it, superiour to God, or equally with him.

The true way to *Wisdom* is to be sensible of our own Folly, *1 Cor. 3. 18. If any man be wise, let him become a fool.* He that distrusts his own guidance, will more securely and successfully follow the Counsel of another in whom he confides. The more Water, or any other Liquor, is poured out of a Vessel, the more Air enters. The more we distrust our own wisdom, the more capable we are of the conduct of Gods.

Had *Jehosaphat* relied upon his own Policy, he might have found a Defeat when he met with a Deliverance; but he disowned his own skill and strength, in telling God, *We know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee, 2 Chron. 20. 12.* Let us therefore with *Augur*, disesteem our own Understanding to esteem Divine. Human Prudence is like a *Spiders-web*, easily blown away, and swept down by the Besom of some unexpected Revolution. God by his Infinite Wisdom can cross the wisdom of Man, and make a Mans own Prudence hang in his own light. *Isaiah 29. 14. The understanding of their Prudent Men shall be hid.*

4. Exhortation. *Seek to God for Wisdom.* The Wisdom we have by Nature, is like the Weeds the Earth brings forth without Tillage. Our Wisdom since the Fall, is the Wisdom of the *Serpent*, without the Innocency of the *Dove*: It flows from Self-love, runs into Self-interest. 'Tis the wisdom of the Flesh, and a prudence to manage means for the contenting our Lusts. Our best wisdom is imperfect, a meer Nothing and Vanity, in comparison of the Divine, as our Beings are in comparison of his Essence. We must go to God for a Holy and Innocent Wisdom, and fill our Cisterns from a pure Fountain. The Wisdom that was the glory of *Solomon*, was the *Donation of the most High. James 1. 5. If any man want wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.* The faculty of Understanding is from God by Nature; but a Heavenly light to direct the Understanding is from God by Grace. Children have an Understanding, but stand in need of wise Masters to rectifie it, and form Judicious Notions in it.

*There is a spirit in man, but the inspiration of the Almighty gives him understanding, Job 32. 8.* We must beg of God, *Wisdom.* The Gospel is the *Wisdom of God*; the Concerns of it great and Mysterious, not to be known without a *New understanding, 1 John 5. 20.* A new Understanding is not to be had but from the Creator of the first. The Spirit of God is the *Searcher of the deep things of God*; the Revealer of them to us, and the enlightner of our Minds to apprehend them; and therefore called, a *Spirit of wisdom and revelation, Eph 1. 17.* *Christ* is made *Wisdom* to us, as well as *Righteousness*; not only by *Imputation*, but *Effusion*||. Seek to God therefore for that Wisdom which is like the *Sun*, and not that Worldly wisdom which is like a *Shadow*: For that Wisdom whose effects are not so outwardly glorious, but inwardly sweet, seek it from him, and seek it in his Word, that is the Transcript of *Divine Wisdom*; through his *Precepts understanding is to be had\**. As the wisdom of Men appears in their Laws; so doth the Wisdom of God in his Statutes.

† See *John 11. 43.*  
*See also*  
*the Parliament.*

† *See* *119.*  
 119.



By this means we arrive to a Heavenly sagacity. If these be rejected, what Wisdom can be in us? a dream and conceit only; *Jer. 8. They have rejected the word of the Lord, and what Wisdom is in them?* Who knows how to order any concerns as he ought; or any one faculty of his Soul? Therefore desire Gods direction in outward concerns, in *personal, family, in Private and Publick*: He hath not only a Wisdom for our Salvation, but for our outward Direction. He doth not only guide us in the one, and leave *Satan* to manage us in the other: Those that go with *Saul* to a Witch of *Endor*, go to Hell for craft, and prefer the Wisdom of the hostile Serpent, before the holy Counsel of a Faithful Creator. If you want health in your Body, you advise with a *Physitian*; if direction for your Estate, you resort to a *Lawyer*; If passage for a voyage, you address to a *Pilot*; why not much more your *selves*, your *all* to a Wise God. As *Pliny* said concerning a Wise man, *Oh sir, how many Cato's are there in that wise Person?* how much more Wisdom than men or Angels possess, is infinitely centered in the Wise God?

5. *Submit to the Wisdom of God in all cases.* What else was inculcated in the first Precept forbidding man to eat of the Fruit of the *tree of Knowledge of good and evil*; but that he should take heed of the swelling of his mind against the Wisdom of God? 'Tis a Wisdom Incomprehensible to flesh and blood: We should adore it in our minds, and resign up our selves to it in our practise: How unreasonable are repinings against God, whereby a Creatures Ignorance endures and judges a Creators Prudence? Were God weak in Wisdom, and only mighty in Power, we might suspect his Conduct. Power without Wisdom and goodness is an unruly and ruinous thing in the World. But God being Infinite in one, as well as the other, we have no reason to be jealous of him, and repine against his methods; Why should we quarrel with him that we are not as high, or as wealthy as others; that we have not presently the Mercy we want? If he be Wise, we ought to stay his time, and wait his leisure, because *he is a God of Judgment. Esa. 30. 18.* Presume not to shorten the time which his discretion hath fixed, 'tis a folly to think to do it. By impatience we cannot hasten relief; we alienate him from us by debasing him to stand at our bar, disturb our selves, lose the comfort of our lives and the sweetness of his mercy. Submission to God we are in no case exempted from, because there is no case wherein God doth not direct all the acts of his Will by Counsel. Whatsoever is drawn by a *strait rule* must be right and strait; the rule that is right in it self, is the measure of the straitness of every thing else: Whatsoever is wrought in the World by God, must be Wise, Good, Righteous; because God is essentially Wisdom, Goodness, and Righteousness.

*Submit to God, (1.) in his Revelations.*

1. *Measure them Not by Reason*: The truths of the gospel must be received with a self emptiness and annihilation of the Creature. If our *Reason* seems to lift up itself against *Revelation*, because it finds no testimony for it in its own light; Consider how Crazy it is in natural and obvious things, and therefore sure it is not strong enough to enter into the depths of Divine Wisdom: The Wisdom of God in the Gospel is too great an Ocean to be contained or laved out by a Cockleshell. It were not infinite, if it were not beyond our finite reach; our Reason must as well stoop to his Wisdom, as our Wills to his Sovereignty. How great a vanity is it for a Glow-worm to boast, that it is as full of light as the Sun in the firmament? for reason to leave its proper sphere, is to fall into confusion, and thicken its own darkness. We should settle our selves in the belief of the Scripture, and confirm our selves by a meditation on those many undeniable arguments, for its divine authority. The fulfilling of its predictions, the *antiquity* of the writing, the *holiness* of the precepts, the *heavenliness* of the Doctrine, the glorious *effects* it hath produced, and doth yet produce, different from human methods of success; and submit our reason to the voice of so high a Majesty.



2. *Not to be too curiously inquisitive into what is not Revealed.* There is something hid in whatsoever is Revealed. We know the son of God was begotten from eternity, but how he was begotten, we are ignorant. We know there is a Union of the Divine Nature with the Human, and that the *Fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily*; but the manner of its inhabitation we are in a great part ignorant of. We know God hath chosen some and refused others, and that he did it with Counsel; but the reason why he chose *this* man and not *that*, we know not; we can refer it to nothing but Gods Sovereign pleasure. 'Tis revealed that there will be *a day wherein God shall judge the World*; but the particular time is not revealed. We know that God Created the World in Time; but why he did not create the World millions of years before, we are ignorant of, and our Reasons would be bewildred in their too much curiosity. If we ask why he did not create it before; we may as well ask why he did create it then? And may not the same question be ask'd, if the World had been Created millions of years before it was? That he Created in *six days*, and not in an instant, is revealed; but why he did not do it in a moment, since we are sure he was able to do it, is not revealed. Are the reasons of a wise mans proceedings hid from us, and shall we presume to dive into the reason of the proceedings of an *only wise God*, which he hath Judged not expedient to discover to us? Some sparks of his Wisdom he hath cauted to issue out, to exercise and delight our Minds; others he keeps within the center of his own breast: We must not go about to unlock his Cabinet. As we cannot reach to the utmost lines of his Power; so we cannot grasp the intimate reasons of his Wisdom. We must still remember, that which is Finite can never be able to comprehend, the Reasons, Motives, and Methods of that which is Infinite. It doth not become us to be resty, because God hath not admitted us into the Debates of Eternity. We are as little to be curious at what God hath hid, as to be careless of what God hath manifested. Too great an inquisitiveness beyond our line, is as much a provoking arrogance, as a blockish negligence of what is revealed, is a slighting ingratitude.

2. *Submit to God in his Precepts and Methods.* Since they are the results of Infinite Wisdom, disputes against them are not tolerable: What orders are given out by Infallible Wisdom are to be entertained with respect and reverence, though the reason of them be not visible to our perblind minds. Shall God have less respect from us than Earthly Princes, whose Laws we observe without being able to pierce into the exact reason of them all? Since we know he hath not a Will without an Understanding, our observance of him must be without Repining; we must not think to mend our Creators Laws, and presume to judge and condemn his Righteous Statutes: If the flesh rise up in opposition, we must cross its motions, and Silence its Murmuring; his Will should be an acceptable Will to us, because it is a wise Will in itself. God hath no need to impose upon us and deceive us; He hath just and righteous waies to attain his glory and his Creatures good. To deceive us, would be to dishonour himself and contradict his own nature. He cannot impose false injurious Precepts or unavailable to his subjects happiness; not false, because of his Truth; not injurious because of his Goodness; not vain, because of his Wisdom. Submit therefore to him in his Precepts, and in his Methods too. The honour of his Wisdom and the interest of our Happiness calls for it. Had *Noah* disputed with God about building an Ark, and listned to the scoffs of the senseless World, he had perished under the same fate and lost the honour of a *Preacher* and *worker of righteousness*. Had not the *Israelites* been their own enemies, if they had been permitted to be their own guides, and returned to the *Egyptian* bondage and furnaces, instead of a liberty and earthly felicity in *Canaan*? Had our Saviour gratified the *Jews* by descending from the Cross and freeing himself from the power of his Adversaries, he might have had that Faith from them which they promised him: but It had been a faith to no purpose, because without ground; they might have believed him to be the *Son of God*, but he could not have been the Saviour of the World: His death the great ground and object of Faith had been unaccomplished, they had believed



a God pardoning without a content to his Justice, and such a Faith could not have rescued them from falling into eternal Misery. The Precepts and Methods of Divine Wisdom must be submitted to.

3. *Submit to God in all Crosses and Revolutions.* Infinite Wisdom cannot err in any of his *paths*, or step the least hairs-breadth from the way of Righteousness: There is the Understanding of God in every motion; an Eye in every Wheel, the Wheel that goes over us and crusheth us. We are led by Fancy more than Reason: We know no more what we ask or what is fit for us, than the Mother of *Zebedees* children did, when she Petitioned Christ for her sons advancement, when he came into his Temporal Kingdom\*: The things we desire might please our Fancy or Appetite, but impair our health: One man complains for want of Children, but knows not whither they may prove Comforts or Crosses: Another for want of Health, but knows not whither the health of his Body may not prove the disease of his Soul. We might lose in Heavenly things, if we possess in Earthly things what we long for. God in regard of his infinite Wisdom is wiser to carve out a condition than we our selves; our Shallow reason, and self-love, would wish for those things, that are injurious to God, to our selves, to the World; but God alwaies chooseth what is best for his Glory, and what is best for his Creatures, either in regard of themselves, or as they stand in relation to him, or to others, as parts of the World.

We are in danger from our self-love, in no danger in complying with Gods Wisdom: When *Rachel* would dye, if she had no Children, she had Children, but *Death* with one of them†. Good men may conclude, that whatsoever is done by God in them or with them, is best and fittest for them; because by the Covenant which makes over God to them, as their God, the conduct of his Wisdom is assured to them as well as any other *Attribute*: And therefore, as God in every transaction appears as their God, so he appears as their wise Director, and by this Wisdom he extracts good out of evill, makes the affliction which destroys our outward Comforts, consume our inward Defilements; And the waves which threatened to swallow up the vessel, to cast it upon the shore: And when he hath occasion to manifest his Anger against his People, his Wisdom directs his Wrath. In Judgment he hath *a work to do upon Zion*, and when that work is done, he punishes the fruit of the stout heart of the King of *Assyria*||; As in the answers of Prayer he doth give oftentimes above what we ask or think, *Eph. 3. 20.* so in outward concerns he doth above what we can expect, or by our short-sightedness conclude will be done; Let us therefore in all things frame our minds to the Divine Wisdom, and say with the *Psalmist*, *Psal 47. 4. The Lord shall chuse our inheritance and condition for us.*

6. *Exhortation. Censure not God in any of his ways.* Can we Understand the full scope of Divine Wisdom in Creation, which is perfected before our Eyes? Can we by a rational knowledge walk over the whole Surface of the Earth, and wade through the Sea? Can we Understand the Nature of the Heavens? Are all, or most, or the thousandth part of the particles of Divine Skill known by us, yea or any of them thoroughly known? How can we then Understand his deeper methods in things, that are but of yesterday, that we have not had a time to View? We should not be too quick or too rash in our Judgments of him: The best that we attain to, is but feeble conjectures at the designs of God.

As there is something hid in whatsoever is revealed in his Word, so there is something inaccessible to us in his Works, as well as in his Nature and Majesty. In our Saviours act in washing his Disciples feet, he checkt *Peters* contradiction, *John 13. 7. What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* God were not infinitely wise if the reason of all his acts were obvious to our Shallowness. He is no profound States-man, whose inward intention can be sounded by vulgar Heads at the first act he starts in his designed method. The wise God is in this like wisemen, that have not breasts like glasses of Chrystal, to discover all that they intend. There are *secrets of Wisdom above our reach*\*; nay when we see all his acts, we cannot see all the draughts of his skill in them. An unskillful hearer of a musical lesson may receive the melody with his Ear, and understand not the rarities of the composition as it was wrought by the Musicians mind. Under the old Testament



Testament there was more of Divine Power, and less of his Wisdom apparent in his acts: As his Laws, so his acts were more fitted to their Sense. Under the *new Testament* there is more of Wisdom and less of power; As his Laws to his acts are more fitted to a spiritual mind; Wisdom is less discernable than power. Our Wisdom therefore in this case, as it doth in other things, consists in silence and expectation of the end and event of a work. We owe that honour to God that we do to men wiser than our selves, to imagin he hath reason to do what he doth, though our shallowness cannot comprehend it. We must suffer God to be wiser than our selves, and acknowledg that there is something sovereign in his waies not to be measured by the feeble reed of our weak understandings. And therefore we should acquiesce in his proceedings; take heed we be not found slanderers of God, but be adorers instead of Censurers; and lift up our hands in admiration of him and his waies, instead of citing him to answer it at our Bar. Many things in the *first* appearance may seem to be rash and unjust, which in the *issue* appear comely and regular. If it had been plainly spoke before that the Son of God should dye, that a most holy person should be crucified; it would have seemed cruel to expose a Son to misery; unjust to inflict punishment upon one that was no Criminal; to joyn together exact Goodness and *Physical evil*; that the Sovereign should dye for the Malefactor, and the Observer of the Law for the Violators of it. But when the *whole design* is unravelled, what an admirable connexion is there of Justice and Mercy, Love and Wisdom, which before would have appeared absurd to the muddled reason of man?

We see the Gardiner pulling up some delightful Flowers by the roots, digging up the Earth, overwhelming it with Dung; an ignorant person would imagine him wild, out of his wits, and charge him with spoiling his Garden: But when the Spring is arrived, the spectator will acknowledge his skill in his former Operations.

The truth is, the whole design and methods of God are not to be judged by us in this World; the full declaration of the whole contexture is reserved for the other World, to make up a part of good mens happiness in the amazing views of divine Wisdom, as well as the other perfections of his nature. We can no more perfectly understand his Wisdom, than we can his Mercy and Justice, till we see the last lines of all drawn, and the full expressions of them: We should therefore be sober and modest in the consideration of Gods ways; *his Judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out.* The riches of his Wisdom are past our counting, his depths not to be fathomed, yet they are depths of righteousness and equity: Though the full manifestation of that equity, the grounds and methods of his proceedings are unknown to us. As we are too short fully to know God, so we are too ignorant fully to comprehend the acts of God: Since he is a *God of Judgment*, we should wait till we see the issue of his works, *Esa. 30. 18.* And in the mean time, with the *Apostle* in the *Text*, give him the glory of all, in the same expressions, *To the only wise God be glory, through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.*



A  
DISCOURSE  
UPON THE  
Power of God.

Job 26. 14.

*Loe, these are parts of his wayes, but how little a portion is heard of him?  
[ but the thunder of his power who can understand? ]*

**B**ILDAD had in the foregoing Chapter entertain'd Job with a Discourse of the dominion and power of God, and the purity of his righteousness, whence he argues an impossibility of the justification of Man in his Presence, who is no better than a Worm. Job in this Chapter acknowledges the greatness of Gods power, and descants more largely upon it than Bildad had done; but doth Preface it with a kind of Ironical speech, as if he had not acted a friendly part, or spake little to the purpose, or the matter in hand: The subject of Job's Discourse was the worldly happiness of the Wicked, and the Calamities of the Godly: And Bildad reads him a Lecture, of the extent of Gods Dominion, the number of his Armies, and the unspotted rectitude of his Nature, in comparison of which the purest Creatures are foul and crooked. Job therefore from verse 1. to verse 4. taxeth him in a kind of scoffing manner, that he had not touched the Point, but rambled from the Subject in hand, and had not applyed a Salve proper to his Sore: Verse 2. *How hast thou helped him that is without power? how savest thou the arm of him that hath no strength?* &c. your discourse is so impertinent, that it will neither strengthen a weak person, nor instruct a simple one\*. But since Bildad would take up the Argument of Gods Power, and discourse so short of it, Job would shew that he wanted not his Instructions in that kind, and that he had more distinct Conceptions of it than his Antagonist had uttered: And therefore from verse 5. to the end of the Chapter, he doth magnificently treat of the Power of God in several Branches. And verse 5. he begins with the lowest.

*Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.* You read me a Lecture of the Power of God in the heavenly Host: Indeed it is visible there, yet of a larger extent; and Monuments of it are found in the lower parts. What do you think of those dead things under the Earth and Waters, of the Corn that dies, and by the moistening influences of the Clouds springs up again with a numerous progeny and increase for the nourishment of man? What do you think of those varieties of Metals and Minerals conceived in the bowels of the Earth; those Pearls and Riches in the depths of the Waters, midwifed by this Power of God? Add to these those more prodigious Creatures in the Sea, the Inhabitants of the Waters, with their vastness and variety, which are all the Births



of Gods Power; both in their first Creation by his mighty Voice, and their propagation by his cherishing Providence.

Stop not here, but consider also that his Power extends to Hell; either the Graves the Repositories of all the crumbled dust that hath yet been in the World (for so Hell is sometimes taken in Scripture: *Verse 6. Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering*) The several lodgings of deceased men are known to him: No skreen can obscure them from his sight, nor their dissolution be any bar to his Power, when the time is come to compact those mouldred Bodies to entertain again their departed Souls, either for weal or woe. The Grave, or Hell, the place of punishment, *is naked before him*; as distinctly discern'd by him, as a naked Body in all its lineaments by us, or a dissected Body is in all its parts by a skilful Eye. *Destruction hath no covering*; none can free himself from the Power of his Hand. Every person in the bowels of Hell; every person punished there, is known to him, and feels the Power of his Wrath.

\* Verse 7.

From the lower parts of the World he ascends to the consideration of the Power of God in the Creation of Heaven and Earth, *He stretches out the North over the empty places* \*. The North, or the North-pole over the Air, which by the Greeks was called *void or empty*, because of the tenuity and thinness of that Element; and he mentions here the North, or North-pole, for the whole Heaven, because it is more known and apparent than the Southern-pole. *And hangs the Earth upon nothing*: The massie and weighty Earth hangs like a thick Globe in the midst of a thin Air, that there is as much Air on the one side of it, as on the other. The Heavens have no prop to sustain them in their height, and the Earth hath no basis to support it in its place. The Heavens are as if you saw a Curtain stretched smooth in the Air without any hand to hold it; and the Earth is as if you saw a Ball hanging in the Air without any solid Body to under-prop it, or any Line to hinder it from falling; both standing Monuments of the Omnipotence of God.

\* Verse 8.

He then takes notice of his daily Power in the Clouds, *He binds up the waters in his thick Clouds, and the Cloud is not rent under them* \*. He compacts the Waters together in Clouds, and keeps them by his Power in the Air against the force of their natural gravity and heaviness, till they are fit to flow down upon the Earth, and perform his pleasure in the places for which he designs them. *The Cloud is not rent under them*; the thin Air is not split asunder by the weight of the Waters contain'd in the Cloud above it. He causes them to distill by drops, and strains them as it were through a thin Lawn, for the refreshment of the Earth; and suffers them not to fall in the whole lump, with a violent torrent, to waste the industry of Man, and bring Famine upon the World, by destroying the Fruits of the Earth. What a wonder would it be to see but one intire drop of water hang it self but one Inch above the ground, unless it be a Bubble which is preserved by the Air inclosed within it? What a wonder would it be to see a Gallon of Water contain'd in a thin Cobweb as strongly as in a Vessel of Brass? Greater is the wonder of Divine Power in those thin Bottles of Heaven, as they are called†; and therefore called *his Clouds* here, as being daily Instances of his Omnipotence: That the Air should sustain those rouling Vessels, as it should seem, weightier than it self: That the force of this Mass of Waters should not break so thin a Prison, and hasten to its proper place which is below the Air: That they should be daily confin'd against their natural inclination, and held by so slight a Chain: That there should be such a gradual and successive falling of them, as if the Air were pierced with holes like a Gardiners watering-pot, and not fall in one intire body to drown or drench some parts of the Earth. These are hourly Miracles of Divine Power, as little regarded as clearly visible.

† Job 38. 37.

‡ Psal. 147. 8.

He proceeds, *Verse 9. He holds back the face of his Throne, and spreads the Cloud upon it*. The Clouds are design'd as Curtains to cover the Heavens, as well as Vessels to water the Earth||. As a Tapestry Curtain between the Heavens, the Throne of God, *Isa. 66. 1.* and the Earth *his Footstool*: the Heavens are called his Throne, because his Power doth most shine forth there, and magnificently declare the glory of God; and the Clouds are as a Skreen between the scorching heat of the Sun, and the tender Plants of the Earth, and the weak Bodies of Men.

From



From hence he descends to the Sea, and considers the Divine Power apparent in the bounding of it: *Verse 10. He hath compassed the Waters with bounds, till the day and night come to an end.* This is several times mention'd in Scripture as a signal Mark of Divine strength\*. He hath measured a place for the Sea, and struck the Limits of it as with a Compass, that it might not mount above the Surface of the Land, and ruin the ends of the Earths Creation; and this while day and night have their mutual turns, till he shall make an end of time by removing the measures of it. The bounds of the tumultuous Sea are in many places as weak as the Bottles of the upper Waters; the one is contain'd in thin Air, and the other restrain'd by weak Sands in many places, as well as by stubborn Rocks in others; that though it swells, foams, roars, and the Waves encourag'd and egg'd on by strong Winds, come like Mountains against the Shore, they overflow it not, but humble themselves when they come near to those Sands, which are set as their Lifts and Limits, and retire back to the Womb that brought them forth, as if they were ashamed and repented of their proud Invasion: Or else it may be meant of the Tydes of the Sea, and the stated time God hath set it for its ebbing and flowing, till night and day come to an end†; both that the fluid Waters should contain themselves within due bounds, and keep their perpetual orderly motion, are amazing Argumens of Divine Power.

He passes on to the Consideration of the Commotions in the Air and Earth rais'd and still'd by the Power of God; *The Pillars of Heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof.* By Pillars of Heaven are not meant Angels, as some think; but either the Air called the Pillars of Heaven in regard of place, as it continues and knits together the parts of the World, as Pillars do the upper and nether parts of a Building. As the lowest parts of the Earth are called the Foundations of the Earth; so the lowest parts of the Heaven may be called the Pillars of Heaven\*. Or else by that Phrase may be meant Mountains, which seem at a distance to touch the Sky, as Pillars do the top of a Structure; and so it may be spoken according to vulgar Capacity, which imagines the Heavens to be sustained by the two extream parts of the Earth, as a Convex Body, or to be archt by Pillars; whence the Scripture, according to common apprehensions, mentions *the ends of the Earth*, and the *utmost parts of the Heavens*, tho they have properly no end, as being round. The Power of God is seen in those Commotions in the Air and Earth, by Thunders, Lightnings, Storms, Earth-quakes, which rack the Air, and make the Mountains and Hills tremble as Servants before a frowning and rebuking Master.

And as he makes motions in the Earth and Air, so is his Power seen in their Influences upon the Sea; *He judges the Sea with his power, and by his understanding he smites through the proud†.* At the Creation he put the Waters into several Channels, and caused the dry Land to appear barefac'd for a Habitation for Man and Beasts; or rather he splits the Sea by Storms, as though he would make the bottom of the Deep visible, and rakes up the Sands to the Surface of the Waters, and marshals the Waves into Mountains and Valleys. After that, he *smites through the proud*, that is, humbles the proud Waves, and by allaying the Storm reduceth them to their former Level: The Power of God is visible, as well in *rebuking*, as in *awakening the winds*; he makes them sensible of his Voice, and according to his Pleasure exasperates or calms them. The *striking through the proud* here, is not probably meant of the destruction of the Egyptian Army; for some guess that Job died that year†, or about the time of the Israelites coming out of Egypt: So that this Discourse here being in the time of his Affliction, could not point at that which was done after his restoration to his temporal Prosperity.

And now at last he sums up the Power of God in the chiefest of his Works above, and the greatest wonder of his Works below: *Verse 13. By his Spirit he hath garnish'd the Heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked Serpent, &c.* The greater and lesser Lights, Sun, Moon, and Stars, the Ornaments and Furniture of Heaven; and the Whale, a prodigious Monument of Gods Power, often mention'd in Scripture to this purpose, and in particular in this Book of Job||, and || Job 41. called by the same name of Crooked Serpent, *Isa. 27. 1.* where it is applied by



way of *Metaphor*, to the King of *Affyria* or *Egypt*, or all Oppressors of the Church. Various Interpretations there are of this *crooked Serpent*: Some understanding that Constellation in Heaven which *Astronomers* call the *Dragon*; some that Combination of weaker Stars, which they call the *Galaxia*, which winds about the Heavens: But it is most probable that *Job*, drawing near to a conclusion of his Discourse, joyns the two greatest Testimonies of Gods Power in the World, the highest Heavens, and the lowest *Leviathan*, which is here called a *bar Serpent* \* in regard of his strength and hardness, as mighty Men are called bars in Scripture, *Jer. 51. 30. Her bars are broken things.* And in regard of this Power of God in the Creation of this Creature, 'tis particularly mention'd in the Catalogue of Gods Works, *Gen. 1. 21. And God created great Whales*; all the other Creatures being put into one sum, and not particularly exprest.

\* As the word signifies in the Hebrew.

And now he makes the use of this Lecture in the *Text*, *Loe, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his Power who can understand?* This is but a small Landskip of some of his Works of Power, the outsidcs and extremities of it; more glorious things are within his Palaces: Though those things argue a stupendous Power of the Creator in his Works of Creation and Providence, yet they are nothing to what may be declared of his Power. And what may be declared, is nothing to what may be conceived; and what may be conceived, is nothing to what is above the conceptions of any Creature. These are but little Crumbs and Fragments, of that infinite Power which is in his Nature, like a drop in comparison of the mighty Ocean; a hiss or whisper in comparison of a mighty Voice of Thunder†. This which I have spoken is but like a Spark to the fiery Region, a few lines by the by, a drop of speech.

† Occolamp.

*The thunder of his Power*: Some understand it of Thunder literally, for material Thunder in the Air: *The Thunder of his Power*, that is according to the *Hebrew* Dialect, *his powerful Thunder*. This is not the sense; the nature of Thunder in the Air doth not so much exceed the capacity of human understanding; 'tis therefore rather to be understood Metaphorically, *The Thunder of his Power*, that is, the greatness and immensity of his Power manifested in the magnificent Miracles of Nature, in the consideration whereof men are astonished, as if they had heard an unusual Clap of Thunder. So Thunder is used, *Job 39. 25. The Thunder of the Captains*; that is, strength and force of the Captains of an Army. And *verse 19. God speaking to Job of a Horse, saith, Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?* that is, strength. And Thunder being a mark of the Power of God, some of the Heathen have called God by the name of a Thunderer\*. As Thunder pierceth the lowest places, and alters the state of things; so doth the Power of God penetrate into all things whatsoever; the Thunder of his Power; that is, the Greatness of his Power: as *the strength of Salvation*, *Psal. 20. 6.* that is, a mighty Salvation.

The ancient Gawi worshiped him under the name of Taranis. The Greeks called Jupiter Berytan and Thor: whence our Thursday is derived, signifying, Thunderer, a title the Germans gave their God. And Toran in the British Language signifies Thunder. Voll. Idolo. lib. 2. cap. 33. Camb. Britan. p. 17.

*Who can understand?* Who is able to count all the Monuments of his Power? How doth this little, which I have spoken of, exceed the capacity of our Understanding, and is rather the matter of our astonishment, than the object of our comprehensive knowledge? The Power of the greatest Potentate or the mightiest Creature, is but of small extent: None but have their limits: It may be understood, how far they can act, in what sphere their activity is bounded: But when I have spoken all of Divine Power that I can; when you have thought all that you can think of it, your Souls will prompt you to conceive something more, beyond what I have spoken, and what you have thought. His Power shines in every thing, and is beyond every thing. There is infinitely more Power lodged in his Nature, not exprest to the World. The understanding of Men and Angels centred in one Creature, would fall short of the perception of the Infiniteness of it. All that can be comprehended of it, are but little Fringes of it, a small Portion. No man ever discours'd, or can, of Gods Power according to the magnificence of it. No Creature can conceive it; God himself only comprehends it; God himself is only able to exprest it. Mans power being limited, his Line is too short to measure the incomprehensible Omnipotence of God. *The thunder of his Power, who can understand?* that is, none can.

The



The *Text* is a lofty declaration of the Divine Power, with a particular note of Attention, *Loe*.

1. In the expressions of it, in the works of Creation and Providence; [*Loe, these are his ways*; Ways and Works excelling any created strength, referring to the little summary of them he had made before. 1.
2. In the Insufficiency of these ways to measure his Power; [*but how little a portion is heard of him?* 2.
3. In the Incomprehensibleness of it; [*The thunder of his Power who can understand?* 3.

Infinite and Incomprehensible Power pertains to the Nature of God, and is express'd in part in his Works: or, Though there be a mighty expression of Divine Power in his Works, yet an Incomprehensible Power pertains to his Nature. The thunder of his Power, who can understand? Doct.

His Power glitters in all his Works, as well as his Wisdom; *Psal. 62. 11. Twice have I heard this, that Power belongs unto God.* In the Law and in the Prophets, say some: But why, *Power* twice, and not *Mercy*, which he speaks of in the following Verse? He had heard of *Power* twice, from the voice of Creation, and from the voice of Government. *Mercy* was heard in Government after Man's Fall, not in Creation; Innocent man was an object of Gods goodness, not of his *Mercy* till he made himself miserable: *Power* was express'd in both; or *Twice have I heard, that Power belongs to God*, that is, it is a certain and undoubted Truth, that *Power* is essential to the Divine Nature. 'Tis true, *Mercy* is essential, *Justice* is essential; but *Power* more apparently essential, because no acts of *Mercy*, or *Justice*, or *Wisdom*, can be exercised by him without *Power*: The repetition of a thing confirms the certainty of it. Some observe, that God is called *Almighty* Seventy times in Scripture\*. Though his *Power* be evident in all his Works, yet he hath a *Power* beyond the expression of it in his Works, which, as it is the glory of his Nature, so it is the comfort of a Believer. To which purpose the Apostle expresseth it by an excellent *Periphrasis* for the honour of the Divine Nature; *Eph. 3. 20. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, unto him be glory in the Churches.* We have reason to acknowledge him *Almighty*, who hath a *Power* of acting above our power of understanding. Who could have imagin'd such a powerful operation in the propagation of the *Gospel*, and the Conversion of the *Gentiles*, which the Apostle seems to hint at in that place? His *Power* is express'd by *Horns in his hands*, *Hab. 3. 4.* because all the Works of his hands are wrought with *Almighty* strength. *Power* is also used as a Name of God, *Mark 14. 62. The Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power*, that is, at the right hand of God: *God* and *Power* are so inseparable that they are reciprocated. As his Essence is Immense not to be confin'd in Place, as it is Eternal, not to be measur'd by Time; so it is *Almighty*, not to be limited in regard of Action.

\* Lessius, de perfect. Divin. lib. 5. cap. 1.

1. 'Tis Ingeniously illustrated by some by a *Unit*; all Numbers depend upon it, it makes Numbers by Addition, Multiplies them unexpressibly; when one *Unit* is removed from a Number, how vastly doth it diminish it? It gives perfection to all other Numbers, it receives perfection from none. If you add a *Unit* before 100, how doth it multiply it to 1100? If you set a *Unit* before twenty Millions, it presently makes the Number swell up to an hundred and twenty Millions: and so powerful is a *Unit* by adding it to Numbers, that it will infinitely enlarge them to such a vastness that shall transcend the capacity of the best *Arithmetician* to count them. By such a Meditation as this you may have some prospect of the *Power* of that God who is only *Unity*; the Beginning of all things, as a *Unit* is the beginning of all Numbers; and can perform as many things really, as a *Unit* can numerically, that is, can do as much in the making of *Creatures*, as a *Unit* can do in the multiplying of Numbers. The Omnipotence of God was scarce denied by any Heathen, that did not deny the Being of a God, and that was *Pliny*; and that upon weak Arguments.

1. † Fotherby, Atheomatic, p. 306, 307.

2. Indeed we cannot have a conception of God, if we conceive him not most *Powerful*, as well as most *Wise*: He is not a God, that cannot do what he will, and perform all his pleasure. If we imagine him restrain'd in his *Power*, we imagine him



him limited in his Essence. As he hath an infinite Knowledge to know what is possible, he cannot be without an infinite Power to do what is possible. As he hath a Will to resolve what he sees good, so he cannot want a Power to effect what he sees good to decree. As the Essence of a Creature cannot be conceiv'd without that activity that belongs to his nature; as when you conceive Fire, you cannot conceive it without a power of burning and warming; and when you conceive Water, you cannot conceive it without a power of moistning and cleansing: So you cannot conceive an Infinite Essence without an Infinite Power of activity. And therefore a Heathen could say, *If you know God, you know he can do all things*; and therefore saith Austin, *Give me not only a Christian but a Jew, not only a Jew but a Heathen, that will deny God to be Almighty*. A Jew, a Heathen may deny Christ to be Omnipotent, but no Heathen will deny God to be Omnipotent, and no Devil will deny either to be so: God cannot be conceiv'd without some Power, for then he must be conceiv'd without Action: Whose then are those products and effects of Power which are visible to us in the World? to whom do they belong? who is the Father of them? God cannot be conceiv'd without a Power suitable to his Nature and Essence; if we imagine him to be of an Infinite Essence, we must imagine him to be of an Infinite Power and Strength.

In particular, I shall shew,

1. *The Nature of God's Power.*
2. *Reasons to prove that God must needs be Powerful.*
3. *How his Power appears; in Creation, in Government, in Redemption.*
4. *The Use.*

1. *What this Power is; or the Nature of it.*

1. *Power sometimes signifies Authority*: And a Man is said to be Mighty and Powerful in regard of his Dominion, and the right he hath to Command multitudes of other persons to take his part; but Power taken for *Strength*, and Power taken for *Authority*, are distinct things, and may be separated from one another: Power may be without Authority, as in successful Invasions that have no just foundation: Authority may be without Power; as in a Just Prince, expell'd by an unjust Rebellion, the Authority resides in him, though he be over-power'd, and is destitute of Strength to support and exercise that Authority. The Power of God is not to be understood of his Authority and Dominion, but *his Strength to act*, and the word in the Text properly signifies *Strength*.

2. *This Power is divided ordinarily into Absolute and Ordinate*. *Absolute*, is that Power whereby God is able to do that which he will not do, but is possible to be done: *Ordinate*, is that Power whereby God doth that which he hath decreed to do, that is, which he hath ordained or appointed to be exercised\*. Which are not distinct Powers, but one and the same Power; his Ordinate Power is a part of his Absolute; for if he had not a Power to do every thing that he could will, he might not have a Power to do every thing that he doth will.

The Object of his *Absolute* Power is all things possible; such things that imply not a contradiction, such that are not repugnant in their own nature to be done, and such as are not contrary to the Nature and Perfections of God to be done: Those things that are repugnant in their own nature to be done are several, as to make a thing which is past not to be past. As for Example, The World is created; God could have chose whether he would create the World, and after it is created he hath Power to dissolve it; but after it was created, and when it is dissolved, it will be eternally true, that the World was created, and that it was dissolved; for it is impossible, that that which was once true, should ever be false: If it be true that the World was created, it will for ever be true that it was created, and cannot be otherwise. And also, if it be once true that God hath decreed, 'tis impossible in its own nature to be true that God hath not decreed. Some things are repugnant to the Nature and Perfections of God: As it is impossible for his Nature to die and perish; impossible for him in regard of Truth, to lye and deceive. But of this hereafter; only at present to understand the Object of Gods Absolute Power to be things possible, that is, possible in Nature; not by any strength in themselves, or of themselves; for nothing hath no strength, and every thing is nothing before it comes into being†: So God by his Absolute Power might have prevented the Sin

of

נבחרתו  
Sept. Div.

\* Scaliger,  
Publ. exercit.  
365. §. 8.

† *Epist. in*  
*Sent. lib. 1.*  
*dist. 43 §. 2.*



of the Fallen Angels, and so have preserved them in their first habitation. He might by his Absolute Power have restrained the Devil from tempting of *Eve*, or restrained Her and *Adam* from swallowing the Bait, and joyning hands with the Temptation. By his Absolute Power, God might have given the reins to *Peter* to betray his Master, as well as to deny him; and employed *Judas* in the same glorious and successful Service, wherein he employed *Paul*. By his Absolute Power he might have created the World Millions of years before he did create it, and can reduce it into its empty Nothing this moment. This the *Baptist* affirms, when he tells us, *That God is able of these Stones* (meaning the Stones in the Wilderness, and not the People which came out to him out of *Judea*, which were Children of *Abraham*) *to raise up Children to Abraham*, *Mat. 3. 9.* that is, there is a possibility of such a thing, there is no contradiction in it, but that God is able to do it if he please.

But now the *Object* of his *Ordinate Power*, is all things ordained by him to be done, all things decreed by him; and because of the Divine ordination of things, this Power is called *Ordinate*; and what is thus ordained by him he cannot but do, because of his Unchangeableness. Both those Powers are exprest, *Mat. 26. 53, 54.* *My Father can send twelve legions of Angels*, there is his Absolute Power; *but how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?* there is his Ordinate Power. As his Power is free from any act of his Will, 'tis called *Absolute*; as it is joyned with an act of his Will, it is called *Ordinate*. His Absolute Power is necessary, and belongs to his Nature; his Ordinate Power is free, and belongs to his Will; a Power guided by his Will; not, as I said before, that they are two distinct Powers, both belonging to his Nature, but the latter is the same with the former, only it is guided by his Will and Wisdom.

3. It follows then, *That the Power of God is that ability and strength, whereby he can bring to pass whatsoever he please.* Whatsoever his infinite Wisdom can direct, and whatsoever the infinite purity of his Will can resolve. Power, in the primary notion of it, doth not signify an act, but an ability to bring a thing into act; 'tis Power, as able to act before it doth actually produce a thing: As God had an Ability to create before he did create, he had Power before he acted that Power without. Power notes the principle of the Action, and therefore is greater than the Act it self. Power exercis'd and diffus'd, in bringing forth and nursing up its particular Objects without, is unconceivably less than that Strength which is Infinite in himself, the same with his Essence, and is indeed Himself: By his Power exercis'd he doth whatsoever he actually Wills; but by the Power in his Nature, he is able to do whatsoever he is able to Will. The Will of Creatures may be, and is more extensive than their Power; and their Power more contracted and shortened, than their Will: But, as the Prophet saith, *His Counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure*, *Isai. 46. 10.* His Power is as great as his Will, that is, whatsoever can fall within the verge of his Will, falls within the compass of his Power. Though he will never actually Will this or that, yet supposing he should Will it, he is able to perform it: So that you must in your notion of Divine Power, enlarge it further than to think, God can only do what he hath resolved to do; but that he hath as Infinite a Capacity of Power to act, as he hath an Infinite Capacity of Will to resolve.

Besides, this Power is of that nature, that he can do whatsoever he pleases without difficulty, without resistance; it cannot be checked, restrained, frustrated\*. As he can do all things possible in regard of the Object, he can do all things easily in regard of the manner of acting: What in humane Artificers is Knowledge, Labour, Industry, that in God is his Will; his Will works without labour, his works stand forth as he Wills them. *Hands* and *Arms* are ascribed to him for our Conceptions, because our power of acting is distinct from our will; but Gods Power of acting is not really distinct from his Will; 'tis sufficient to the existence of a thing, that God Wills it to exist; he can act what he will only by his Will, without any Instruments. He needs no Matter to work upon, because he can make something from nothing; all Matter owes it self to his Creative Power: He needs no time to work in, for he can make Time, when he pleases to begin to work: He needs no Copy to work by, Himself is his own Pattern and Copy in his Works. All created Agents

\* *Cra. Syntag.*  
lib. 3. cap. 17.  
p. 611.



Agents want Matter to work upon. Instruments to work with, Copies to work by; Time to bring either the births of their Minds, or the works of their hands to perfection: But the Power of God needs none of these things, but is of a vast and Incomprehensible nature, beyond all these. As nothing can be done without the compass of it, so it self is without the compass of every Created Understanding.

4. *This Power is of a distinct conception from the Wisdom and Will of God.* They are not really distinct, but according to our Conceptions. We cannot discourse of Divine things, without observing some proportion of them with humane, ascribing unto God the Perfections, sifted from the Imperfections of our Nature. In Us there are *three Orders, of Understanding, Will, Power*; and accordingly *three Acts, Counsel, Resolution, Execution*; which though they are distinct in Us, are not really distinct in God. In our Conceptions, the Apprehension of a thing belongs to the Understanding of God; Determination, to the Will of God; Direction, to the Wisdom of God; Execution, to the Power of God. The Knowledge of God regards a thing as possible, and as it may be done; the Wisdom of God regards a thing as fit, and convenient to be done; the Will of God resolves that it shall be done; the Power of God is the application of his Will, to effect what it hath resolved. Wisdom is a fixing the Being of things, the measures and perfections of their several Beings; Power is a conferring those Perfections and Beings upon them. His Power is his ability to act, and his Wisdom is the Director of his action: His Will orders, his Wisdom guides, and his Power effects. His Will as the spring, and his Power as the worker, are exprest *Psal. 115. 3. He hath done whatsoever he pleased. He commanded, and they were created, Psal. 140. 5.* and all three exprest *Eph. 1. 11. Who works all things according to the counsel of his own will*: So that the Power of God is a Perfection (as it were) subordinate to his Understanding and Will, to execute the results of his Wisdom and the orders of his Will; to his Wisdom as directing, because he works skilfully; to his Will as moving and applying, because he works voluntarily and freely. The exercise of his Power depends upon his Will: His Will is the supream cause of every thing that stands up in Time, and all things receive a Being as he wills them. His Power is but Will perpetually working, and diffusing it self in the season his Will hath fixed from Eternity; 'tis his Eternal Will in perpetual and successive springs and streams in the Creatures; 'tis nothing else but the constant efficacy of his Omnipotent Will. This must be understood of his Ordinate Power: But his Absolute Power is larger than his Resolving Will: for though the Scripture tells us, *He hath done whatsoever he will*; yet it tells us not, that he hath done whatsoever he could: He can do things that he will never do.

Again, His Power is distinguished from his Will in regard of the Exercise of it, which is after the act of his Will: His Will was conversant about Objects, when his Power was not exercis'd about them. Creatures were the objects of his Will from Eternity, but they were not from Eternity the effects of his Power. His Purpose to Create was from Eternity, but the execution of his Purpose was in Time. Now this execution of his Will we call his *Ordinate Power*: His Wisdom and his Will are supposed antecedent to his Power, as the Counsel and Resolve, as the Cause precedes the performance of the Purpose, as the effect.

\* *Garnacheus.*

\* Some distinguish his Power from his Understanding and Will, in regard that his Understanding and Will are larger than his Absolute Power; for God understands Sins, and wills to permit them, but he cannot himself do any Evil or Unjust action, nor have a power of doing it. But this is not to distinguish that Divine Power, but Impotence; for to be unable to do Evil is the perfection of Power; and to be able to do things Unjust and Evil, is a weakness, imperfection, and inability. Man indeed wills many things that he is not able to perform, and understands many things that he is not able to effect; he understands much of the Creatures, something of *Sun, Moon and Stars*; he can conceive many *Suns*, many *Moons*, yet is not able to create the least Atom: But there is nothing that belongs to Power but God understands, and is able to effect. To sum this up, The Will of God is the Root of all, the Wisdom of God is the Copy of all, and the Power of God is the Framer of all.

5. *The*



5. *The Power of God gives activity to all the other perfections of his Nature, and is of a larger extent and efficacy, in regard of its Objects, than some perfections of his Nature.* I put them both together. 5.

1. *It contributes Life and Activity to all the other perfections of his Nature.* 1.  
How vain would be his Eternal Counsels, if Power did not step in to execute them? His Mercy would be a feeble pity, if he were destitute of Power to relieve; and his Justice a slighted Scarecrow, without Power to punish; his Promises an empty sound, without Power to accomplish them. As Holiness is the Beauty, so Power is the Life of all his Attributes in their exercise; and as Holiness, so Power is an Adjunct belonging to All, a Term that may be given to All. God hath a powerful Wisdom to attain his Ends, without interruption: He hath a powerful Mercy to remove our Misery; a powerful Justice to lay all Misery upon Offenders: He hath a powerful Truth to perform his Promises; an Infinite Power to bestow Rewards and inflict Penalties. 'Tis to this purpose Power is first put in the *two things* which the Psalmist had heard, *Psal. 62. 11, 12. Twice have I heard, or two things have I heard; first Power, then Mercy and Justice, included in that expression, Thou rendrest to every man according to his work:* In every perfection of God he heard of Power. This is the Arm, the Hand of the Deity, which all his other Attributes lay hold on, when they would appear in their Glory; this hands them to the World; by this they act, in this they triumph. Power framed every stage for their appearance in Creation, Providence, Redemption.

2. *'Tis of a larger extent in regard of its Objects, than some other Attributes.* 2.  
Power doth not alway suppose an Object, but constitutes an Object. It supposeth an Object in the act of Preservation, but it makes an Object in the act of Creation; but Mercy supposeth an object Miserable, yet doth not make it so. Justice supposeth an object Criminal, but doth not constitute it so: Mercy supposeth him Miserable, to relieve him; Justice supposeth him Criminal, to punish him: but Power supposeth not a thing in real existence, but as possible; or rather, it is from Power that any thing hath a possibility, if there be no repugnancy in the nature of the thing.

Again, *Power* extends further than either *Mercy* or *Justice*. Mercy hath particular Objects, which Justice shall not at last be willing to punish; and Justice hath particular Objects, which Mercy at last shall not be willing to refresh: but Power doth, and alway will extend to the Objects of both Mercy and Justice. A Creature, as a Creature, is neither the object of Mercy nor Justice, nor of Rewarding Goodness: A Creature, as Innocent, is the Object of Rewarding Goodness; a Creature, as Miserable, is the Object of Compassionate Mercy; a Creature, as Criminal, is the Object of Revenging Justice: but all of them the Objects of Power, in conjunction with those Attributes of Goodness, Mercy, and Justice, to which they belong. All the Objects that Mercy, and Justice, and Truth, and Wisdom, exercise themselves about, have a possibility and an actual Being from this perfection of Divine Power. 'Tis Power first frames a Creature in a capacity of Nature for Mercy or Justice, though it doth not give an immediate qualification for the exercise of either. Power makes Man a Rational Creature, and so confers upon him a Nature mutable, which may be Miserable by its own fault, and punishable by Gods Justice; or pityable by Gods Compassion, and relievable by Gods Mercy: but it doth not make him Sinful, whereby he becomes miserable and punishable.

Again, *Power* runs through all the degrees of the states of a Creature. As a thing is possible, or may be made, 'tis the Object of Absolute Power; as it is *factibile*, or ordered to be made, 'tis the Object of Ordinate Power: As a thing is actually made, and brought into Being, it is the Object of Preserving Power. So that Power doth stretch out its Arms to all the Works of God, in all their Circumstances, and at all Times. When Mercy ceaseth to relieve a Creature, when Justice ceaseth to punish a Creature, Power ceaseth not to preserve a Creature. The Blessed in Heaven, that are out of the reach of punishing Justice, are for ever maintained by Power in that Blessed Condition: the Damned in Hell, that are cast out of the Bosom of Intreating Mercy, are for ever sustain'd in those remediless Torments by the Arm of Power.



6. *This Power is Originally and Essentially in the Nature of God, and not distinct from his Essence.* 'Tis Originally and Essentially in God. The strength and power of Great Kings is originally in their People, and managed and ordered by the Authority of the Prince for the Common good. Though a Prince hath Authority in his Person to Command, yet he hath not sufficient Strength in his Person, without the Assistance of Others, to make his Commands to be obeyed. He hath not a single Strength in his own Person to conquer Countries and Kingdoms, and increase the Number of his Subjects: He must make use of the Arms of his own Subjects, to over-run other places, and yoke them under his Dominion: But the Power of all things that ever were, are, or shall be, is Originally and Essentially in God. 'Tis not deriv'd from any thing without him, as the Power of the greatest Potentates in the World is: Therefore *Psal. 62.11.* it is said, *Power belongs unto God*, that is, solely, and to none else. He hath a Power to make his Subjects, and as many as he pleases; to create Worlds, to enjoin Precepts, to execute Penalties, without calling in the strength of his Creatures to his Aid. The Strength that the Subjects of a Mortal Prince have, is not deriv'd to them from the Prince, though the Exercise of it for this or that end, is ordered and directed by the Authority of the Prince: But what Strength soever any thing hath to act as a Means, it hath from the Power of God as Creator, as well as whatsoever Authority it hath to act is from God, as a Rector and Governour of the World. God hath a Strength to act without Means, and no Means can act any thing without his Power and Strength communicated to them. As the *Clouds* in the 8th Verse before the Text, are called Gods Clouds, *his Clouds*: So all the Strength of Creatures may be called, and truly is, Gods Strength and Power in them; a drop of Power shot down from Heaven, originally only in God. Creatures have but a little Mite of Power; somewhat communicated to them, somewhat kept and reserved from them, of what they are capable to possess. They have limited Natures, and therefore a limited Sphere of Activity. Clothes can warm us, but not feed us; Bread can nourish us, but not cloath us. One Plant hath a Medicinal quality against one Disease, another against another; but God is the possessor of Universal Power, the Common Exchequer of this Mighty Treasure. He acts by Creatures, as not needing their power, but deriving power to them: What he acts by them, he could act himself without them: And what they act as from themselves, is derived to them from Him through Invisible Channells. And hence it will follow, that because Power is Essentially in God, more Operations of God are possible than are exerted.

† *Ratione Summe actualitatis essentie.*  
*Suarez, vol. 1.*  
 p. 150, & 151.

And as *Power* is Essentially in God, so it is not distinct from his Essence. It belongs to God in regard of the unconceivable Excellency and Activity of his Essence†. And *Omnipotence* is nothing but the Divine Essence efficacious *ad extra*. 'Tis his Essence as operative, and the immediate principle of Operation: As the power of Enlightning in the Sun, and the power of Heating in the Fire, are not things distinct from the Nature of them; but the Nature of the Sun bringing forth *Light*, and the Nature of the Fire bringing forth *Heat*. The power of Acting is the same with the Substance of God, though the Action from that Power be terminated in the Creature. If the Power of God were distinct from his Essence, he were then compounded of Substance and Power, and would not be the most Simple Being. As when the Understanding is inform'd in several parts of Knowledge; it is skill'd in the Government of Cities and Countries, it knows this or that Art: It Learns *Mathematicks*, *Philosophy*; this, or that Science. The Understanding hath a power to do this; but this power, whereby it Learns those Excellent things, and brings forth Excellent Births, is not a thing distinct from the Understanding it self; we may rather call it the *Understanding powerful*, than the *Power of the Understanding*; and so we may rather say, *God powerful*, than say, *the Power of God*; because his Power is not distinct from his Essence.

From both these it will follow, That this Omnipotence is incommunicable to any Creature; no Creature can inherit it, because it is a contradiction for any Creature to have the Essence of God. This *Omnipotence* is a peculiar Right of God, wherein no Creature can share with him. To be Omnipotent is to be Essentially



trially God. And for a Creature to be Omnipotent, is for a Creature to be its own Creator. It being therefore the same with the Essence of the Godhead, it cannot be communicated to the Humanity of Christ, as the *Lutherans* say it is, without the communication of the Essence of the Godhead\*; for then the Humanity of Christ would not be Humanity, but Deity. If Omnipotence were communicated to the Humanity of Christ, the Essence of God were also communicated to his Humanity, and then Eternity would be communicated. His Humanity then was not given him in Time, his Humanity would be uncompounded, that is, his Body would be no Body, his Soul no Soul. Omnipotence is Essentially in God; 'tis not distinct from the Essence of God, 'tis his Essence, *Omnipotent*, able to do all things.

7. Hence it follows, *That this Power is infinite*; Eph. 1. 19. *What is the exceeding greatness of his power, &c. According to the working of his mighty power.* God were not Omnipotent, unless his Power were Infinite; for a Finite Power is a limited Power, and a limited Power cannot effect every thing that is possible. Nothing can be too difficult for the Divine Power to effect: He hath a Fulness of Power, an Exceeding Strength, above all Humane Capacities; 'tis a *Mighty power*†, able to do above all that we can ask or think||: That which he acts, is above the power of any Creature to act. Infinite Power consists in the bringing things forth from nothing. No Creature can imitate God in this Prerogative of Power. Man indeed can carve various Forms, and erect various pieces of Art; but from preexistent Matter. Every Artificer hath the Matter brought to his hand, he only brings it forth in a new Figure. *Chimists* separate one thing from another, but create nothing, but sever those things which were before compacted and crudled together: But when God speaks a powerful Word, Nothing begins to be Something: Things stand forth from the Womb of Nothing and obey his mighty Command, and take what Forms he is pleased to give them. The Creating one thing, though never so small and minute, as the least Fly, cannot be but by an Infinite Power; much less can the producing of such Variety we see in the World. His Power is Infinite, in regard it cannot be resisted by any thing that he hath made; nor can it be confin'd by any thing he can will to make. *His Greatness is unsearchable*\*. 'Tis a Greatness, not of quantity, but quality. The Greatness of his Power hath no end: 'Tis a vanity to imagine any limits can be affixed to it, or that any Creature can say, *Hitherto it can go, and no further*. 'Tis above all Conception, all Inquisition of any Created Understanding. No Creature ever had, nor ever can have that strength of Wit and Understanding, to conceive the extent of his Power, and how Magnificently he can work.

1. *His Essence is Infinite.* As in a Finite Subject there is a Finite Vertue: so in an Infinite Subject there must be an Infinite Vertue. Where the Essence is limited, the Power is so†: Where the Essence is unlimited, the Power knows no bounds||. Among Creatures, the more excellency of Being and Form any thing hath, the more activity, vigour and power it hath, to work according to its Nature. The *Sun* hath a mighty power to warm, enlighten and fructify, above what the *Stars* have; because it hath a vaster Body, more intense degrees of light, heat, and vigour. Now, if you conceive the *Sun* made much greater than it is, it would proportionably have greater degrees of power to heat and enlighten than it hath now: And were it possible to have an Infinite Heat and Light, it would infinitely heat and enlighten other things; for every thing is able to act according to the Measures of its Being: Therefore, since the Essence of God is unquestionably Infinite, his power of Acting must be so also. His Power (as was said before) is one and the same with his Essence: And though the Knowledge of God extends to more Objects than his Power, because he knows all Evils of Sin, which because of his Holiness he cannot commit; yet it is as Infinite as his Knowledge, because it is as much one with his Essence, as his Knowledge and Wisdom is: For as the Wisdom or Knowledge of God, is nothing but the Essence of God, Knowing; so the Power of God, is nothing but the Essence of God, Able.

2. *The Objects of Divine Power are innumerable.* The Objects of Divine Power are not Essentially Infinite; and therefore we must not measure the Intiniteness of Divine Power by an Ability to make an Infinite Being; because there

† Eph. 1. 19.  
|| Eph. 3. 20.

Psal. 145. 3.

† *Operationes  
sequantur essen-  
tiam.*  
|| *Aq. in par. 1.  
Q. 25. artic. 2.*



is an Incapacity in any created thing to be Infinite; for to be a Creature and to be Infinite; to be Infinite and yet Made, is a contradiction. To be Infinite, and to be God, is one and the same thing. Nothing can be Infinite, but God; nothing but God is Infinite. But the Power of God is Infinite, because it can produce Infinite effects, or Innumerable things, such as surpass the *Arithmetick* of a Creature; nor yet doth the Infiniteness consist simply in producing innumerable Effects; for that a Finite Cause can produce. Fire can by its finite and limited Heat burn numberless combustible things and parcels; and the Understanding of Man hath an infinite number of thoughts and acts of Intellection, and Thoughts different from one another. Who can number the Imaginations of his Fancy, and Thoughts of his Mind, the space of one Month or Year? much less of Forty or an Hundred years; yet all these Thoughts are about things that are in Being, or have a foundation in things that are in Being. But the Infiniteness of Gods Power consists in an ability to produce Infinite Effects, formally distinct, and diverse from one another; such as never had Being, such as the Mind of Man cannot conceive: *Able to do above what we can think, Eph. 3.20.* And whatsoever God hath made, or is able to make, he is able to make in an Infinite manner, by calling them to stand forth from nothing. To produce innumerable Effects of distinct Natures, and from so distant a term as *Nothing*, is an argument of Infinite Power.

Eph. 3.20.

Now, that the *Objects* of Divine Power are *Innumerable* appears, because God can do Infinitely more than he hath done, or will do. Nothing that God hath done can enfeeble or dull his Power; there still resides in him an Ability beyond all the settled Contrivances of his Understanding, and Resolves of his Will, which no Effects which he hath wrought can drain and put to a stand. As he can raise *Stones to be Children to Abraham\**; so with the same mighty Word whereby he made one World, he can make Infinite numbers of Worlds, to be the Monuments of his Glory. After the Prophet *Jeremy*, 32. 17. had spoke of Gods Power in Creation, he adds, *And nothing is too hard for thee.* For one World that he hath made, he can create Millions: For one Star which he hath beautified the Heavens with, he could have garnisht it with a Thousand, and multiplied, if he had pleased, every one of those into Millions, for *he can call things that are not*; not some things, but all things possible. The barren Womb of *Nothing* can no more resist his Power now to educe a World from it, than it could at first: No doubt, but for one Angel which he hath made, he could make many Worlds of Angels. He that made one with so much ease, as by a Word, cannot want Power to make many more, till he wants a Word. The Word that was not too weak to make One, cannot be too weak to make Multitudes. If from One Man he hath, in a way of Nature, multiplied so many in all Ages of the World, and covered with them the whole Face of the Earth; he could in a Supernatural way, by One Word, multiply as many more. 'Tis *the breath of the Almighty* that gives life, *Job. 33. 4.* He can create infinite Species and kinds of Creatures more than he hath created, more variety of Forms: For since there is no searching of his Greatness, there is no conceiving the numberless possible effects of his Power. The Understanding of Man can conceive Numberless things possible to be, more than have been or shall be. And shall we imagine, that a Finite Understanding of a Creature hath a greater Omnipotency to conceive things possible, than God hath to produce things possible? When the Understanding of Man is tyr'd in its Conceptions, it must still be concluded, That the Power of God extends, not only to what can be conceiv'd, but infinitely beyond the measures of a Finite faculty. *Touching the Almighty we cannot find him out, he is excellent in power and in judgment, Job. 36. 23.* For the Understanding of Man, in its Conceptions of more kind of Creatures, is limited to those Creatures which are: It cannot, in its own Imagination conceive any thing, but what hath some foundation in and from something already in Being. It may frame a new kind of Creature, made up of a *Lion*, a *Horse*, an *Ox*; but all those parts whereof its Conception is made, have distinct Beings in the World, though not in that composition as his Mind mixes and joyns them: But no question but God can create Creatures that have no resemblance with any kind of Creatures yet in Being. 'Tis certain, that if God only knows those things which he hath done, and will do, and not all things possible to be done

\* Mat. 23.

Rom. 4. 17.

by



by him, his knowledge were finite; so if he could do no more than what he hath done, his Power would be finite.

1. *Creatures have a power to act about more objects than they do.* The Understanding of man can frame from one Principle of Truth many Conclusions and Inferences more than it doth. Why cannot then the Power of God frame from one first Matter, an infinite number of Creatures more than have been created? The Almightiness of God in producing real Effects, is not inferior to the Understanding of man in drawing out real Truths. An Artificer that makes a Watch, supposing his life and health, can make many more of a different form and motion: And a Limner can draw many Draughts, and frame many Pictures with a new variety of Colours, according to the richness of his Fancy. If these can do so, that require a preexistent Matter fram'd to their hands, God can much more, who can raise beautiful Structures from nothing. As long as men have matter, they can diversifie the matter, and make new Figures from it: So long as there is nothing, God can produce out of that nothing whatsoever he pleases.

We see the same in Inanimate Creatures. A spark of Fire hath a vast Power in it; it will kindle other things, increase and enlarge it self: Nothing can be exempt from the active force of it. It will alter by consuming or refining whatsoever you offer to it. It will reach all, and refuse none; and by the efficacious power of it, all those *new Figures* which we see in Metals, are brought forth: When you have expos'd to it a multitude of things, still add more, it will exert the same strength; yea, the vigour is increased rather than diminish'd. The more it catcheth, the more fiercely and irresistibly it will act; you cannot suppose an end of its operation, or a decrease of its strength, as long as you can conceive its duration and continuance: This must be but a weak shadow of that infinite Power which is in God. Take another Instance in the *Sun*: It hath power every year to produce Flowers and Plants from the Earth; and as is able to produce them now, as it was at the first lighting it and rearing it in the Sphear wherein it moves. And if there were no kind of Flowers and Plants now created, the Sun hath a power residing in it, ever since its first Creation, to afford the same warmth to them for the nourishing and bringing them forth. Whatsoever you can conceive the Sun to be able to do in regard of Plants, that can God do in regard of Worlds; produce more Worlds than the Sun doth Plants every year, without weariness, without languishment. The Sun is able to influence more things than it doth, and produce numberless effects; but it doth not do so much as it is able to do, because it wants matter to work upon: God therefore who wants no matter, can do much more than he doth; He can either act by second Causes if there were more, or make more second Causes if he pleas'd.

2. *God is the most free Agent.* Every free Agent can do more than he will do. Man being a free Creature, can do more than ordinarily he doth will to do. God is most free, as being the Spring of Liberty in other Creatures: He acts not by a necessity of Nature; as the waves of the Sea, or the motions of the Wind; and therefore is not determin'd to those things which he hath already called forth into the World. If God be infinitely wise in contrivance, he could contrive more than he hath, and therefore can effect more than he hath effected. He doth not act to the extent of his Power upon all occasions. 'Tis according to his will that he works, *Eph. 1.* 'Tis not according to his work that he wills; his work is an evidence of his will, but not the rule of his will. His Power is not the rule of his Will, but his Will is the disposer of his Power, according to the light of his infinite Wisdom, and other Attributes that direct his Will; and therefore his Power is not to be measur'd by his actual Will. No doubt, but he could in a *moment* have produced that World which he took *six days* time to frame: He could have drown'd the old World at once, without prolonging the time till the revolution of *forty days*: He was not limited to such a term of time by any weakness, but by the determination of his own Will. God doth not do the hundred thousandth part of what he is able to do, but what is convenient to do, according to the end which he hath propos'd to himself. *Jesus Christ*, as Man, could have ask'd *Legions of Angels*; and God, as a Sovereign, could have sent them. God could raise the dead every day if he pleas'd, but he doth not: He could heal every diseas'd person in a mo- † Matth. 25. 53.



moment, but he doth not: As God can will more than he doth actually will; so he can do more than he hath actually done: He can do whatsoever he can will; he can will more Worlds, and therefore can create more Worlds. If God hath not ability to do more than he will do, he then can do no more than what he actually hath done; and then it will follow, that he is not a free, but a natural and necessary Agent, which cannot be supposed of God.

2. *This Power is infinite in regard of action.* As he can produce numberless Objects above what he hath produced, so he could produce them more magnificently than he hath made them. As he never works to the extent of his Power in regard of things, so neither in regard of the manner of acting; for he never acts so but he could act in a higher and perfecter manner.

¶ Suarez vol. 1.  
de Dio. p. 151.

1. *His Power is infinite in regard of the independency of Action:* He wants no Instrument to act. When there was nothing but God, there was no cause of action but God: When there was nothing in being but God, there could be no instrumental Cause of the being of any thing. God can perfect his action without dependance on any thing ||; And to be simply independent, is to be simply infinite. In this respect it is a Power incommunicable to any Creature, though you conceive a Creature in higher degrees of perfection than it is. A Creature cannot cease to be dependent, but it must cease to be a Creature: To be a Creature and independent, are terms repugnant to one another.

¶ Becan. Sum.  
Theol. p. 22.

2. *But the infiniteness of Divine Power consists in an ability to give higher degrees of perfection to every thing which he hath made.* \* As his Power is infinite extensive, in regard of the multitude of Objects he can bring into being; so it is infinite intensive, in regard of the manner of operation, and the endowments he can bestow upon them. Some things indeed God doth so perfect, that higher degrees of perfection cannot be imagined to be added to them †.

† Becan. Sum.  
Theol. p. 84.

As the Humanity of Christ cannot be united more gloriously than to the Person of the Son of God; a greater degree of perfection cannot be conferred upon it. Nor can the Souls of the Blessed have a nobler Object of vision and fruition than God himself, the infinite Being: No higher than the enjoyment of himself can be conferred upon a Creature, *Respectu termini*. This is not want of power: He cannot be greater because he is greatest, nor better because he is best; nothing can be more than infinite. But as to the things which God hath made in the World, he could have given them other manner of beings than they have. A human Understanding may improve a thought or conclusion; strengthen it with more and more force of reason, and adorn it with richer and richer elegance of Language: Why then may not the Divine Providence produce a World more perfect and excellent than this? He that makes a plain Vessel, can embellish it more, engrave more Figures upon it, according to the capacity of the subject: And cannot God do so much more with his Works? Could not God have made this World of a larger quantity, and the Sun of a greater bulk and proportionable strength to influence a bigger World? so that this World would have been to another that God might have made, as a Ball or a Mount, this Sun as a Star to another Sun that he might have kindled. He could have made every Star a Sun, every spire of Grass a Star, every grain of Dust a Flower, every Soul an Angel. And though the Angels be perfect Creatures, and unexpressibly more glorious than a visible Creature; yet who can imagine God so confin'd, that he cannot create a more excellent kind, and endow those which he hath made with excellency of a higher rank than he invested them with at the first moment of their Creation? Without question God might have given the meaner Creatures more excellent endowments, put them into another order of nature for their own good and more diffusive usefulness in the World. What is made use of by the Prophet || in another case, may be used in this, *Yet had he a residue of Spirit*. The capacity of every Creature might have been enlarg'd by God; for no work of his in the World doth equal his Power, as nothing that he hath framed doth equal his Wisdom. The same matter which is the matter of the body of a Beast, is the matter of a Plant and Flower; is the matter of the body of a Man; and so was capable of a higher form and higher perfections, than God hath been pleas'd to bestow upon it. And he had power to bestow that perfection on one part of matter which he denied to it, and bestowed on another

|| Mal 2. 15.



ther part. If God cannot make things in a greater perfection, there must be some limitation of him: He cannot be limited by another, because nothing is superior to God. If limited by himself, that limitation is not from a want of Power, but a want of Will. He can by his own Power raise Stones to be Children to Abraham\*: He could alter the nature of the Stones, form them into Human Bodies, dignify them with rational Souls, inspire those Souls with such Graces that may render them the Children of Abraham. But for the more fully understanding the nature of this Power, we may observe,

1. *That though God can make every thing with a higher degree of perfection, yet still within the limits of a finite Being.* No Creature can be made infinite, because no Creature can be made God. No Creature can be so improved, as to equal the goodness and perfection of God†; yet there is no Creature, but we may conceive a possibility of its being made more perfect in that rank of a Creature than it is: As we may imagine a Flower or Plant to have greater beauty and richer qualities imparted to it by Divine Power, without rearing it so high as to the dignity of a rational or sensitive Creature. Whatsoever perfections may be added by God to a Creature, are still finite perfections; and a multitude of finite excellencies can never amount to the value and honour of infinite: As if you add one number to another as high as you can, as much as a large piece of Paper can contain, you can never make the numbers really infinite, though they may be infinite in regard of the inability of any human Understanding to count them. The finite condition of the Creature suffers it not to be capable of an infinite perfection. God is so great, so excellent, that it is his perfection not to have any Equal; the defect is in the Creature, which cannot be elevated to such a pitch; as you can never make a Gallon measure to hold the quantity of a Butt, or a Butt the quantity of a River, or a River the fulness of the Sea.

2. *Though God hath a Power to furnish every Creature with greater and nobler perfections than he hath bestowed upon it, yet he hath framed all things in the perfectest manner, and most convenient to that end for which he intended them.*

Every thing is endowed with the best nature and quality suitable to Gods end in Creation, though not in the best manner for it self||. In regard of the Universal end, there cannot be a better; for God himself is the End of all things, who is the supreme Goodness. Nothing can be better than God, who could not be God if he were not Superlatively best or *Optimus*; and he hath ordered all things for the declaration of his Goodness or Justice, according to the behaviours of his Creatures. Man doth not consider what strength or power he can put forth in the means he useth to attain such an end, but the suitability of them to his main design, and so fits and marshals them to his grand purpose. Had God only created things that are most excellent, he had created only Angels and Men; how then would his Wisdom have been conspicuous in other works in the subordination and subserviency of them to one another? God therefore determin'd his Power by his Wisdom:

\* And though his absolute Power could have made every Creature better, yet his ordinate Power, which in every step was regulated by his Wisdom, made every thing best for his design'd intention. A Musician hath a power to wind up a string on a Lute to a higher and more perfect Note in it self, but in wisdom he will not do it, because the intended Melody would be disturb'd thereby, if it were not suited to the other Strings on the Instrument; a Discord would mar and taint the Harmony which the Lutenist design'd. God in Creation observed the Proportions of Nature: He can make a Spider as strong as a Lion; but according to the order of Nature which he hath settled, 'tis not convenient that a Creature of so small a compass should be as strong as one of a greater bulk. The absolute Power of God could have prepared a Body for Christ as glorious as that he had after his Resurrection; but that had not been agreeable to the end design'd in his Humiliation: And therefore God acted most perfectly by his ordinate Power, in giving him a Body that wore the Livery of our Infirmities. Gods Power is alway regulated by his Wisdom and Will; and though it produceth not what is most perfect in it self, yet what is most perfect and decent in relation to the end he fixed. And so in his Providence, though he could rack the whole Frame of Nature to bring about his ends in a more miraculous way and astonishment to Mortals; yet his Power is usually and

\* Matth. 3. 9.

† Gamach in  
Aquin. tom. 1.  
qu. 25.

|| Best ex parte  
facientis & mo-  
di, but not ex  
parte rei. Esti.  
in Senten. lib. 1.  
distin. 44. § 2.

\* Aquin. part.  
1. qu. 25. artic.  
6.



and ordinarily confin'd by his Will to act in concurrence with the nature of the Creatures, and direct them according to the Laws of their being, to such ends which he aims at in their conduct, without violencing their Nature.

3. *Though God hath an absolute Power to make more Worlds, and infinite numbers of other Creatures, and to render every Creature a higher mark of his Power, yet in regard of his decree to the contrary, he cannot do it.* He hath a Physical Power, but after his resolve to the contrary, not a Moral Power: *The exercise*

† Gamach in  
Aquin. tom. 1.  
q. 116. 25.

Of his Power is subordinate to his decree, but not the essence of his Power. † The decree of God takes not away any Power from God, because the Power of God is his own Essence, and incapable of change; and is as great physically and essentially after his decree as it was before; only his Will hath put in a bar to the demonstration of all that Power which he is able to exercise. As a Prince that can raise a 100000 men for an Invasion, raises only 20 or 30000; he here, by his order limits his Power, but doth not devest himself of his Authority and Power to raise the whole number of the Forces of his Dominions if he pleases: The Power of God hath more Objects than his Decree hath; but since it is his perfection to be immutable, and not to change his Decree, he cannot morally put forth his Power upon all those Objects, which as it is essentially in him, he hath Ability to do. || God hath decreed to save those that believe in Christ, and to judge Unbelievers to everlasting Perdition: He cannot morally damn the first, or save the latter; yet he hath not devested himself of his Absolute Power to save all, or damn all. Or suppose God hath decreed not to create more Worlds than this we are now in, doth his decree weaken his strength to create more if he pleased: His not creating more is not a want of strength, but a want of will: 'Tis an act of Liberty, not an act of Impotency. As when a man solemnly resolves not to walk in such a way, or come at such a place, his Resolution deprives him not of his natural strength to walk thither; but fortifies his Will against using his strength in any such motion to that place. The Will of God hath set bounds to the exercise of his Power, but doth not infringe that Absolute Power which still resides in his Nature: He is girded with more power than he puts forth\*.

‡ Crell. de Dio,  
cap. 22.

\* Psal. 65. 6.

4.

† Rom. 1. 20.

4. As the Power of God is infinite in regard of his Essence, in regard of the Objects, in regard of Action, so Fourthly, in regard of Duration. The Apostle calls it an eternal power†. His eternal Power is collected and concluded from the things that are made: They must needs be the products of some Being which contains truly in it self all Power, who wrought them without Engines, without Instruments; and therefore this Power must be infinite, and possessed of an unalterable vertue of acting. If it be eternal, it must be infinite, and hath neither beginning nor end; what is eternal hath no bounds. If it be eternal, and not limited by time, it must be infinite, and not to be restrain'd by any finite Object: His Power never begun to be, nor ever ceaseth to be, it cannot languish; men are fain to unbend themselves, and must have some time to recruit their tyred spirits: But the Power of God is perpetually vigorous, without any interrupting qualm. Isa. 40. 28. *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard that the everlasting God the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the Earth fainteth not, neither is weary?* That Might which suffered no diminution from Eternity, but hatcht so great a World by brooding upon nothing, will not suffer any dimness or decrease to Eternity. This Power being the same with his Essence, is as durable as his Essence, and resides for ever in his Nature.

8.

8. The Eighth Consideration, for the right understanding of this Attribute, *The impossibility of Gods doing some things, is no infringing of his Almightyness, but rather a strengthening of it.* 'Tis granted that some things God cannot do; or rather, as Aquinas and others, 'tis better to say, such things cannot be done, than to say that God cannot do them; to remove all kind of imputation or reflection of weakness on God ||, and because the reason of the impossibility of those things is in the nature of the things themselves.

|| Robins. obser-  
vati. p. 14.

1. First, *Some things are impossible in their own nature.* Such are all those things which imply a Contradiction; as for a thing to be, and not to be at the same time; for the Sun to shine, and not to shine at the same moment of time; for a Creature to act, and not to act at the same instant: One of those parts must be false;



false; for if it be true that the Sun shines this moment, it must be false to say it doth not shine. So it is impossible that a rational Creature can be without reason: 'Tis a contradiction to be a rational Creature, and yet want that which is essential to a rational Creature. So it is impossible that the Will of man can be compelled, because Liberty is the Essence of the Will; while it is Will it cannot be contrain'd; and if it be contrain'd it ceaseth to be Will. \* God cannot at one time act as the Author of the Will, and the Destroyer of the Will. 'Tis impossible that Vice and Virtue, Light and Darkness, Life and Death should be the same thing. Those things admit not of a Conception in any Understanding. Some things are impossible to be done, because of the incapability of the subject; as for a Creature to be made infinite, independent, to preserve it self without the Divine concurrence and assistance. So a Brute cannot be taken into communion with God, and to everlasting spiritual Blessedness, because the Nature of a Brute is incapable of such an Elevation: A rational Creature only can understand and relish spiritual delights, and is capable to enjoy God and have communion with him. Indeed God may change the nature of a Brute, and bestow such Faculties of Understanding and Will upon it, as to render it capable of such a Blessedness; but then 'tis no more a Brute, but a rational Creature; but while it remains a Brute, the excellency of the Nature of God doth not admit of communion with such a Subject: So that this is not for want of Power in God, but because of a deficiency in the Creature: To suppose that God could make a Contradiction true, is to make himself false; and to do just nothing.

\* Magalano. de  
Scientia Dei,  
part. 2. c. 6. § 3.

2. *Some things are impossible to the Nature and Being of God.* As to dye, implies a flat repugnance to the Nature of God: To be able to die, is to be able to be cashier'd out of being. If God were able to deprive himself of life, he might then cease to be: He were not then a necessary, but an uncertain contingent being, and could not be said *only to have Immortality*, as he is †. He cannot dye who is life it self, and necessarily Existent: He cannot grow old or decay, because he cannot be measur'd by time. And this is no part of Weakness, but the perfection of Power. His Power is that whereby he remains for ever fixed in his own everlasting being; that cannot be reckoned as necessary to the Omnipotence of God, which all Mankind count a part of weakness in themselves. God is Omnipotent because he is not Impotent; and if he could dye, he would be Impotent, not Omnipotent: Death is the feebleness of Nature. 'Tis undoubtedly the greatest impotence to cease to be: Who would count it a part of Omnipotency to disenable himself, and sink into nothing and not being. The impossibility for God to dye, is not a fit Article to impeach his Omnipotence; this would be a strange way of arguing, a thing is not powerful, because it is not feeble, and cannot cease to be powerful; for Death is a cessation of all Power. || God is Almighty in doing what he will, not in suffering what he will not. To dye is not an active, but a passive Power; a defect of a Power: God is of too noble a Nature to perish. || August.

Some things are impossible to that eminency of Nature which he hath above all Creatures; as to walk, sleep, feed, these are Imperfections belonging to Bodies and compounded Natures. If he could walk, he were not every where present: Motion speaks Succession. If he could encrease, he would not have been perfect before.

3. *Some things are impossible to the glorious perfections of God.* God cannot do any thing unbecoming his holiness and goodness; any thing unworthy of himself, and against the perfections of his Nature. God can do whatsoever he can will. As he doth actually do whatsoever he doth actually will; so it is possible for him to do whatsoever it is possible for him to will. He doth whatsoever he will, and can do whatsoever he can will; but he cannot do what he cannot will: He cannot will any unrighteous thing, and therefore cannot do any unrighteous thing. God cannot love sin, this is contrary to his Holiness; he cannot violate his Word, this is a denial of his Truth; he cannot punish an Innocent, this is contrary to his Goodness; he cannot cherish an impenitent Sinner, this is an injury to his Justice: He cannot forget what is done in the World, this is a disgrace to his Omniscience; he cannot deceive his Creature: This is contrary to his faithfulness: none of these things can be done by him, because of the perfection of his Nature.



Would it not be an imperfection in God to absolve the Guilty, and condemn the Innocent? Is it congruous to the righteous and holy nature of God to command Murder and Adultery; to command men not to worship him, but to be base and unthankful? These things would be against the Rules of Righteousness. As when we say of a good Man, he cannot rob or fight a Duel; we do not mean that he wants a courage for such an Act, or that he hath not a natural strength and knowledge to manage his Weapon as well as another; but he hath a righteous Principle strong in him which will not suffer him to do it; his will is settled against it: No Power can pass into Act unless applied by the will. But the will of God cannot will any thing but what is worthy of him, and decent for his Goodness.

\* Hebr. 6. 18.

† 2 Tim. 2. 13.

‡ Bezan. sum.  
Theolog. p. 83.

\* Maximus  
Tyrius.

† Ambrose.

1. *The Scripture saith 'tis impossible for God to lye\**; and God cannot deny himself because of his faithfulness †. As he cannot dye, because he is life it self; as he cannot deceive, because he is goodness it self; as he cannot do an unwise action, because he is wisdom it self; so he cannot speak a false word, because he is truth it self. If he should speak any thing as true, and not know it, where is his infinite Knowledge and Comprehensiveness of Understanding? If he should speak any thing as true, which he knows to be false, where is his infinite Righteousness? If he should deceive any Creature, there is an end of his Perfection of Fidelity and Veracity. If he should be deceiv'd himself, there is an end of his Omniscience; we must then fancy him to be a deceitful God, an ignorant God, that is, no God at all. || If he should lye, he would be God and no God; God upon supposition, and no God, because not the first Truth. All Unrighteousness is Weakness, not Power; 'tis a Defection from right Reason, a Deviation from Moral Principles, and the Rule of perfect Action, and ariseth from a defect of Goodness and Power: 'Tis a Weakness, and not Omnipotence, to lose Goodness: \* God is Light, 'tis the perfection of Light not to become Darkness, and a want of Power in Light, if it should become Darkness: His Power is infinitely strong, so is his Wisdom infinitely clear, and his Will infinitely pure: Would it not be a part of Weakness to have a disorder in himself, and these Perfections shock one against another? Since all Perfections are in God in the most Sovereign height of Perfection, nothing can be done by the Infiniteness of one against the Infiniteness of the other. He would then be unstable in his own Perfections, and depart from the infinite rectitude of his own Will, if he should do an evil action. Again; † What is an Argument of greater strength, then to be utterly ignorant of Infirmary? God is Omnipotent, because he cannot do Evil, and would not be Omnipotent if he could: Those things would be Marks of Weakness, and not Characters of Majesty. Would you count a sweet Fountain impotent, because it cannot send forth bitter Streams? Or the Sun weak, because it cannot diffuse Darkness as well as Light in the Air? There is an inability arising from Weakness, and an ability arising from Perfection: 'Tis the Perfection of Angels and blessed Spirits, that they cannot sin; And it would be the Imperfection of God, if he could do Evil.

2. *Hence it follows, that 'tis impossible that a thing past should not be past.* If we ascribe a Power to God, to make a thing that is past not to be past, we do not truly ascribe Power to him, but a Weakness: For it is to make God to lye: As though God might not have created man, yet after he had created Adam, though he should presently have reduced Adam to his first nothing, yet it would be for ever true that Adam was created, and it would for ever be false that Adam never was created: So though God may prevent sin, yet when sin hath been committed, it will always be true that sin was committed: It will never be true to say such a Creature that did sin, did not sin; his sin cannot be recalled: Though God by pardon take off the Guilt of Peter's denying our Saviour, yet it will be eternally true, that Peter did deny him. It is repugnant to the Righteousness and Truth of God, to make that which was once true to become false, and not true; that is, to make a Truth to become a Lye, and a Lye to become a Truth.

‡ Bezan. sum.  
Theol. p. 84.  
Crel. de Dio,  
cap. 22.

This is well argued from Hebr. 6. 18. *'Tis impossible for God to lye.* || The Apostle argues, that what God had promised and sworn will come to pass, and cannot but come to pass. Now if God could make a thing past not to be past, this consequence would not be good, for then he might make himself not to have promised,  
not



not to have sworn, after he hath promised and sworn: And so if there were a power to undo that which is past, there would be no foundation for Faith, no certainty of Revelation. It cannot be asserted, that God hath created the World, that God hath sent his Son to dye, that God hath accepted his death for man: These might not be true, if it were possible that, that which hath been done, might be said never to have been done: So that what any may imagine to be a want of Power in God, is the highest perfection of God; and the greatest security to a believing Creature that hath to do with God.

Fourthly, *Some things are impossible to be done, because of God's Ordination.* Some things are impossible, not in their own nature, but in regard of the determin'd Will of God: So God might have destroy'd the World after *Adam's* fall, but it was impossible; not that God wanted Power to do it, but because he did not only decree from Eternity to create the World, but did also decree to redeem the World by *Jesus Christ*, and erected the World in order to the manifestation of his glory in *Christ*. *Eph. 1. 4. 5.* The choice of some in *Christ* was before the foundation of the World: Supposing that there was no hinderance in the Justice of God to pardon the sin of *Adam* after his fall, and to execute no punishment on him; yet in regard of Gods threatening, that in the day he eat of the forbidden fruit, he should dye, it was impossible. So though it was possible that the Cup should pass from our blessed Saviour, that is, possible in its own nature; yet it was not possible in regard of the determination of Gods Will; since he had both decreed and publisht his Will to redeem Man by the Passion and Blood of his Son. These things God by his absolute Power might have done, but upon the account of his decree, they were impossible, because it is repugnant to the Nature of God to be mutable: 'Tis to deny his own Wisdom which contriv'd them, and his own Will which resolv'd them, not to do that which he had decreed to do. This would be a diffidence in his Wisdom, and a change of his Will. The impossibility of them is no result of a want of Power, no mark of an Imperfection, of Feebleness and Impotence; but the Perfection of Immutability and Unchangeableness.

Thus have I endeavoured to give you a right Notion of this excellent Attribute of the Power of God, in as plain terms as I could; which may serve us for a matter of Meditation, Admiration, Fear of him, Trust in him, which are the proper Uses we should make of this Doctrine of Divine Power. The want of a right understanding of this Doctrine of the Divine Power hath caused many to run into mighty Absurdities; I have therefore taken the more pains to explain it.

II. The second thing I propos'd, is the *Reasons to prove God to be Omipotent.* The Scripture describes God by this Attribute of Power. *Psal. 115. 3.* He hath done whatsoever he pleased. It sometimes sets forth his Power in a way of derision of those that seem to doubt of it. When *Sarah* doubted of his ability to give her a Child in her old Age, *Gen. 18. 14.* Is any thing too hard for the Lord? They deserve to be scoff'd, that will despoil God of his strength, and measure him by their shallow Models. And when *Moses* uttered something of unbelief of this Attribute, as if God were not able to feed 600000 *Israelites* besides Women and Children, which he aggravates by a kind of imperious scoff; Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? Or shall all the fish of the Sea be gathered together for them? &c. *Numb. 11. 23.* God takes him up short, *vers. 23.* Is the Lords hand waxed short? What, can any weakness seize upon my Hand? Can I not draw out of my own Treasures what is needful for a supply? The Hand of God is not at one time strong, and another time feeble. Hence it is that we read of the Hand and Arm of God, an out-stretched Arm; because the strength of a man is exerted by his Hand and Arm; the Power of God is called the Arm of his Power, and the right hand of his Strength. Sometimes, according to the different manifestation of it, it is express'd by Finger, when a less power is evidenc'd; by Hand, when something greater; by Arm, when more mighty than the former. Since God is Eternal, without limits of time, he is also Almighty, without limits of strength. As he cannot be said to be more in Being now than he was before; so he is neither more nor less in strength than he was before: As he cannot cease to be, so he cannot cease to be Powerful, because he is Eternal. His Eternity and



\* Rom. 1. 20.  
† Dan. 11. 36.

Power are link'd together as equally demonstrable \*; God is called the God of Gods, *El Elohim* †, the Mighty of Mighties, whence all mighty persons have their activity and vigor: He is called the Lord of Hosts, as being the Creator and Conductor of the heavenly Militia.

Reason 1. *The Power that is in Creatures demonstrates a greater and an unconceivable Power in God.* Nothing in the World is without a power of Activity according to its Nature: No Creature but can act something: The Sun warms and enlightens every thing: It sends its Influences upon the Earth, into the bowels of the Earth, into the depths of the Sea: All Generations owe themselves to its instrumental Vertue: How powerful is a small Seed to rise into a mighty Tree with a lofty top, and extensive branches, and send forth other Seeds, which can still multiply into numberless Plants? How wonderful is the Power of the Creator, who hath endowed so small a Creature as a Seed with so fruitful an Activity? Yet this is but the vertue of a limited nature: God is both the producing and preserving cause of all the vertue in any Creature, in every Creature: The power of every Creature belongs to him as the Fountain, and is truly his Power in the Creature. As he is the first Being, he is the original of all Being; as he is the first Good, he is the Spring of all Goodness; as he is the first Truth, he is the source of all Truth; so as he is the first Power, he is the Fountain of all Power.

1. *He therefore that communicates to the Creature what power it hath, contains eminently much more power in himself.* Psal. 94. 10. *He that teaches man knowledge, shall not he know?* So he that gives created Beings power, shall not he be Powerful? The first Being must have as much Power as he hath given to others: He could not transfer that upon another, which he did not transcendently possess himself. The sole cause of created Power cannot be destitute of any Power in himself. We see that the power of one Creature transcends the power of another. Beasts can do the things that Plants cannot do; besides the power of growth, they have a power of sense and progressive motion: Men can do more than Beasts; they have rational Souls to measure the Earth and Heavens, and to be repositories of multitudes of things, Notions and Conclusions. We may well imagine Angels to be far superior to man: The power of the Creator must far surmount the power of the Creature, and must needs be Infinite; for if it be limited, it is limited by himself or by some other; if by some other, he is no longer a Creator, but a Creature; for that which limits him in his Nature, did communicate that Nature to him; not by himself, for he would not deny himself any necessary Perfection: We must still conclude a reserve of Power in him, that he that made these can make many more of the same kind.

2. *All the power which is distinct in the Creatures, must be united in God.* One Creature hath a strength to do this, another to do that; every Creature is as a Cistern filled with a particular and limited power, according to the capacity of its nature, from this Fountain; all are distinct Streams from God: But the strength of every Creature, though distinct in the rank of Creatures, is united in God the Center, whence those lines were drawn, the Fountain whence those Streams were deriv'd: If the power of one Creature be admirable, as the power of an Angel, which the || Psalmist saith, *excellerh in strength*; how much greater must the power of a Legion of Angels be? How unconceivably superior the power of all those numbers of spiritual Natures, which are the excellent Works of God? Now if all this particular power which is in every Angel distinct, were compacted in one Angel, how would it exceed our Understanding, and be above our power to form a distinct Conception of it? What is thus divided in every Angel, must be thought united in the Creator of Angels, and far more excellent in him. Every thing is in a more noble manner in the Fountain, than in the Streams which distill and descend from it. He that is the Original of all those distinct Powers, must be the Seat of all Power without distinction: In him is the Union of all without division; what is in them as a quality, is in him as his Essence. Again, if all the powers of several Creatures, with all their principal qualities and vigors, both of Beasts, Plants, and rational Creatures, were united in one Subject; As if one Lion had the strength of all the Lions that ever were; or if one Elephant had the strength of all the Elephants that ever were; nay, if one Bee had all the power of motion and



and singing that all Bees ever had, it would have a vast strength; but if the strength of all those thus gathered into one of every kind should be lodged in one sole Creature, one Man, would it not be a Strength too big for our conception? Or suppose one Canon had all the force of all the Canons that ever were in the World, what a battery would it make, and, as it were, shake the whole frame of Heaven and Earth? All this Strength must be much more incomprehensible in God, all is united in him. If it were in one individual Created Nature, it would still be but a finite Power in a finite Nature: But in God it is Infinite and Immenſe.

Reas. 2. *If there were not, an incomprehensible Power in God, he would not be infinitely perfect.* God is the First Being; It can only be said of him, *Eſt*, he is. All other things are nothing to him, *Leſs than nothing, and vanity*, *Iſai. 40. 17. and reputed as nothing*, *Dan. 4. 35.* All the Inhabitants of the Earth, with all their Wit and Strength, are counted as if they were not; juſt in compariſon with Him and his Being, as a little Mote in the Sun-beams: God therefore is a pure Being. Any kind of Weakneſs whatſoever is a defect, a degree of not Being; ſo far as any thing wants this or that Power, it may be ſaid Not to be. Were there any thing of Weakneſs in God, any want of ſtrength which belong'd to the perfection of a Nature, it might be ſaid of God, He is not this or that, he wants this or that perfection of Being, and ſo he would not be a pure Being, there would be ſomething of not Being in him. But God being the First Being, the only Original Being, He is infinitely diſtant from not Being, and therefore infinitely diſtant from any thing of Weakneſs.

\* Again, If God can know whatſoever is poſſible to be done by him and cannot do it, there would be ſomething more in his Knowledge than in his Power. What would then follow? That the Eſſence of God would be in ſome regard greater than it ſelf, and leſs than it ſelf, becauſe his Knowledge and his Power are his Eſſence; his Power as much his Eſſence, as his Knowledge: And therefore, in regard of his Knowledge his Eſſence would be greater, in regard of his Power his Eſſence would be leſs, which is a thing impoſſible to be conceived in a moſt perfect Being. We muſt underſtand this of thoſe things, which are properly and in their own Nature ſubjected to the Divine Knowledge; for otherwiſe God knows more than he can do; for he knows Sin, but he cannot act it; becauſe Sin belongs not to Power, but Weakneſs; and Sin comes under the Knowledge of God, not in it ſelf and its own Nature, but as it is a defect from God, and contrary to Good, which is the proper Object of Divine Knowledge. He knows it alſo not as poſſible to be done by himſelf, but as poſſible to be done by the Creature. † Again, If God were not Omnipotent, we might imagine ſomething more perfect than God: For if we bar God from any one thing which in its own nature is poſſible, we may imagine a Being that can do that thing, one that is able to effect it; and ſo imagine an Agent greater than God, a Being able to do more than God is able to do, and conſequently a Being more perfect than God: But no Being more perfect than God can be imagin'd by any Creature. Nothing can be called moſt Perfect, if any thing of Activity be wanting to it. Active Power follows the perfection of a thing, and all things are counted more noble, by how much more of Efficacy and Virtue they poſſeſs. We count thoſe the beſt and moſt perfect Plants, that have the greateſt Medicinal Virtue in them, and power of working upon the Body for the cure of Diſtempers. God is perfect of himſelf, and therefore moſt powerful of himſelf. If his Perfection in Wiſdom and Goodneſs be unſearchable, his Power, which belongs to Perfection, and without which all the other Excellencies of his Nature were inſignificant, and could not ſhew themſelves, (as was before evidenc'd) muſt be unſearchable alſo. 'Tis by the Title of *Almighty* he is denominated, when declared to be Unſearchable to perfection. *Job 11. 7. Canſt thou by ſearching find out God, canſt thou find out the Almighty to perfection?* This would be limited and ſearched out, if he were deſtitute of an active Ability to do whatſoever he pleaſed to do, whatſoever was poſſible to be done. As he hath not a perfect liberty of Will, if he could not will what he pleaſed; ſo he would not have a perfect Activity, if he could not do what he willed.

Reas. 3.

\* Victoria.  
in Petar.  
Tom. 1. p. 333.

† Victoria. in  
Petar. Tom. 1.  
p. 333.



Reason 3. *The Simplicity of God manifests it.* Every Substance, the more Spiritual it is, the more Powerful it is. All Perfections are more united in a simple, than in a compounded Being. Angels, being Spirits, are more powerful than Bodies. Where there is the greatest Simplicity, there is the greatest Unity; and where there is the greatest Unity, there is the greatest Power.\* Where there is a composition of a Faculty and a Member, the Member or Organ may be weaken'd and render'd unable to act, though the Power doth still reside in the Faculty. As a Man, when his Arm or Hand is cut off or broke, he hath the faculty of Motion still; but he hath lost that Instrument, that part whereby he did manifest and put forth that Motion: But God being a pure Spiritual Nature, hath no Members, no Organs to be defac'd or impair'd. All Impediments of Action arise either from the nature of the thing that acts, or from something without it. There can be no hindrance to God to do whatsoever he pleases; not in himself, because he is the Most Simple Being, hath no contrariety in himself, is not compos'd of divers things: And it cannot be from any thing without himself, because nothing is equal to him, much less Superiour. He is the Greatest, the Supream: All things were made by him, depend upon him, nothing can disappoint his Intentions.

Reas. 4. *The Miracles that have been in the World evidence the Power of God.* Extraordinary productions have awakened Men from their stupidity, to the acknowledgment of the Immensity of Divine Power. Miracles are such effects as have been wrought without the assistance and cooperation of Natural Causes, yea contrary, and besides the ordinary course of Nature, above the reach of any Created Power. Miracles have been; and saith *Bradwardine*\*, *To deny that ever such things were, is uncivil: 'Tis inhuman to deny all the Histories of Jews and Christians*; whosoever denies Miracles, must deny all possibility of Miracles, and so must imagine himself fully skill'd in the extent of Divine Power. How was the *Sun* suspended from its Motion for some hours; The *Dead* raised from the Grave; Those reduc'd from the brink of it, that had been brought near to it by prevailing Diseases; and this by a word speaking? How were the famisht *Lions* bridled from exercising their rage upon *Daniel*, expos'd to them for a Prey? The activity of the *Fire* curb'd for the preservation of the *Three Children*? Which proves a Deity more powerful than all Creatures. No power upon Earth can hinder the operation of the Fire upon combustible Matter, when they are united, unless by quenching the Fire, or removing the Matter: But no created Power can restrain the Fire, so long as it remains so, from acting according to its Nature. This was done by God, in the case of the *Three Children*, and that of the *Burning Bush*. It was as much miraculous that the Bush should not consume, as it was natural that it should burn by the efficacy of the Fire upon it. No Element is so obstinate and deaf, but it hears and obeys his Voice, and performs his Orders, though contrary to its own Nature: All the violence of the Creature is suspended as soon as it receives his Command. † He that gave the original to Nature, can take away the necessity of Nature: He presides over Creatures, but is not confin'd to those Laws he hath prescrib'd to Creatures. He framed Nature, and can turn the Channels of Nature according to his own pleasure. Men dig into the bowels of Nature, search into all the Treasures of it, to find Medicines to cure a Disease, and after all their Attempts it may prove Labour in vain: But God, by one Act of his Will, one Word of his Mouth, overturns the Victory of Death, and rescues from the most desperate Diseases\*. All the Miracles which were wrought by the *Apostles*, either speaking some Words, or Touching with the Hand, were not effected by any virtue inherent in their Words or in their Touches. For such Virtue inherent in any created finite Subject would be created and finite it self, and consequently were incapable to produce effects, which required an infinite Virtue, as Miracles do which are above the power of Nature. So when our *Saviour* wrought Miracles, it was not by any quality resident in his humane Nature, but by the sole Power of his Divinity. The Flesh could only do what was proper to the Flesh; but the Deity did what was proper to the Deity. *God alone doth wonders.* Excluding every other cause from producing such things. He only doth those things which are above the power of Nature, and cannot be wrought

\* *Lib. 1. cap. 1.*  
p. 38.

*Josh. 10. 13.*

*Dan. 6. 22.*

*Dan. 3. 15.*

*Exod. 3. 2.*

† *Damianus in*  
*Petar.*

\* *Fauch.*  
*in Acts Vol. 2.*  
§. 56.

*Psal. 136. 4.*



wrought by any Natural causes whatsoever. He doth not hereby put his Omnipotence to any stress: 'Tis as easie with him to turn Nature out of its settled course, as it was to place it in that station it holds, and appoint it that course it runs. All the Works of Nature are indeed Miracles and Testimonies of the Power of God producing them, and sustaining them: But Works above the Power of Nature, being Novelties and unusual, strike Men with a greater admiration upon their appearance, because they are not the products of Nature, but the convulsions of it.

I might also add as an Argument, The Power of the Mind of Man to conceive more than hath been wrought by God in the World. And God can work whatsoever Perfection the Mind of man can conceive: Otherwise the reaches of a created Imagination and Fancy, would be more extensive than the Power of God. His Power therefore is far greater than the conception of any Intellectual Creature; else the Creature would be of a greater capacity to conceive, than God is to effect. The Creature would have a power of Conception, above Gods Power of Activity; and consequently a Creature, in some respect greater than himself. Now whatsoever a Creature can conceive possible to be done, is but finite in its own nature; and if God could not produce what Being a created Understanding can conceive possible to be done, he would be less than Infinite in Power, nay, he could not go to the extent of what is Finite. But I have touched this before; That God can create more than he hath created, and in a more perfect way of Being, as considered simply in themselves.

### III. The Third general thing, is to declare, *How the Power of God appears, in Creation, in Government, in Redemption.*

1. *In Creation.* With what Majestick Lines doth God set forth his Power, in the giving Being, and Endowments to all the Creatures in the World? All that is in Heaven and Earth is his, and shews the greatness of his Power, Glory, Victory, and Majesty. The Heaven being so Magnificent a piece of work, is called emphatically, *The Firmament of his Power*\*; his Power being more conspicuous and unvail'd in that glorious Arch of the World. Indeed, *God exalts by his Power*†, that is, exalts himself by his Power in all the Works of his hands; in the smallest Shrub, as well as the most glorious Sun. All his Works of Nature are truly Miracles, though we consider them not, being blinded with too frequent and customary a sight of them; yet in the neglect of all the rest, the view of the Heavens doth more affect us with astonishment at the Might of Gods Arm: These declare his Glory, and the Firmament shews his handy work. And the Psalmist peculiarly calls them *His Heavens*, and the work of *his Fingers*: These were immediately created by God, whereas many other things in the World were brought into Being by the Power of God, yet by the means of the influence of the Heavens.

1. *His Power is the first thing evident in the story of the Creation.* In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth, Gen. 1.1. There's no appearance of any thing in this declaratory Preface, but of Power: The Characters of Wisdom march after in the distinct formation of things, and animating them with suitable qualities for an Universal good. By *Heaven* and *Earth* is meant the whole mass of the Creatures: By *Heaven*, all the Aery Region, with all the Host of it; by the *Earth* is meant, all that which makes the intire inferior Globe. The Jews observe, that in the first of *Genesis*, in the whole Chapter unto the finishing the Work in six Days, God is called *אלהים*, which is a Name of Power, and that *Thirty two times* in that Chapter; but after the finishing the six days Work, he is called *יהוה*, which according to their notion is a Name of Goodness and Kindness. His Power is first visible in framing the World, before his Goodness is visible in the sustaining and preserving it. It was by this Name of Power and Almighty that he was known in the first Ages of the World, not by his Name *Jehovah*; Exod. 6.3. *And I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them.* Not but that they were acquainted with the Name, but did not experience the intent of the Name, which signified his Truth in the performance of his

Job 38.

1 Chro 29.11.

\* Psal. 150.1.

† Job 35.22.

Psal. 19.1.

Psal. 8.3.

\* Mercet, p. 7.

col. 1, 2.



his Promises: They knew him by that name as promising; but they knew him not by that Name, as performing. He would be known by his Name *Jehovah*, True to his Word, when he was about to effect the Deliverance from *Egypt*; a Type of the *Eternal Redemption*, wherein the Truth of God, in performing of his first Promise, is gloriously magnified. And hence it is that God is called *Almighty* more in the Book of *Job*, than in all the Scripture besides, I think about *Thirty two times*, and *Jehovah* but once, which is *Job* 12.9. unless in *Job* 38. when God is introduc'd speaking himself; which is an Argument of *Jobs* living before the Deliverance from *Egypt*, when God was known more by his Works or Creation, than by the performance of his Promises, before the Name *Jehovah* was formally publish'd. Indeed, this Attribute of his *Eternal Power*, is the first thing visible and intelligible upon the first glance of the eye upon the Creatures †. Bring a man out of the Cave where he hath been Nurst, without seeing any thing out of the confines of it, and let him lift up his Eyes to the Heavens, and take a prospect of that glorious body the *Sun*, then cast them down to the Earth, and behold the Surface of it with its Green cloathing; the first Notion which will start up in his Mind from that spring of Wonders, is that of *Power*, which he will at first adore with a Religious astonishment. The Wisdom of God in them is not so presently apparent, till after a more exquisite consideration of his Works and Knowledge of the properties of their natures, the conveniency of their situations, and the usefulness of their functions, and the order wherein they are linkt together for the good of the Universe.

† Rom. 1.20.

2. By this Creative Power God is often distinguished from all the Idols and False gods in the World. And by this Title he sets forth himself when he would act any great and wonderful Work in the World. He is great above all gods, for he hath done whatsoever he pleased in Heaven and in Earth. Upon this is founded all the Worship he challengeth in the World, as his peculiar glory. *Revel. 4.11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power, for thou hast Created all things.* And *Rev. 10. 6. I have made the Earth, and created Man upon it. I, even my hands have stretched out the Heavens, and all their Host have I commanded, Isai. 45. 12. What is the issue, Verse 16. They shall be ashamed and confounded, all of them, that are makers of Idols.* And the weakness of Idols is express'd by this Title, *The gods that have not made the Heavens and the Earth, Jer. 10.11. The portion of Jacob is not like them, for he is the former of all things, Verse 16.*

Psal. 135.5,6.

What is not that God able to do, that hath created so great a World? How doth the Power of God appear in Creation?

1. In making the World of Nothing. When we say, the World was made of Nothing, we mean, that there was no Matter existent for God to work upon, but what he rais'd himself in the first act of Creation. In this regard, the Power of God in Creation surmounts his Power in Providence. Creation supposeth nothing, Providence supposeth something in Being. Creation intimates a Creature making, Providence speaks a thing already made, and capable of Government, and in Government. God uses second Causes to bring about his Purposes.

1. The World was made of nothing. The Earth which is describ'd as the first Matter, without any form or ornament, without any distinction or figures, was of Gods forming in the Bulk, before he did adorn it with his Pencil \*. † God in the beginning creating the Heaven and the Earth, includes two things: First, That those were created in the beginning of time, and before all other things. Secondly, That God begun the Creation of the World from those things. Therefore before the Heavens and the Earth there was nothing absolutely created, and therefore no Matter in being before an act of Creation pass upon it. It could not be Eternal, because nothing can be Eternal but God; it must therefore have a beginning: If it had a beginning from it self, then it was before it was. If it acted in the making it self before it was made, then it had a being before it had a being; for that which is nothing, can act nothing: The action of any thing supposeth the existence of the thing which acts. It being made, it was not before it was made; for to be made is to be brought into being. It was made then by another, and that Maker

\* Gen. 1.1,2.

† Suarez.

Vol. 3. p. 33.



Maker is God. 'Tis necessary that the *first Original* of things was from nothing : When we see one thing to arise from another, we must suppose an Original of the first of each kind : As when we see a Tree spring up from a Seed, we know that Seed came out of the bowels of another Tree ; it had a Parent, and it had a Matter ; we must come to some First, or else we run into an endless Maze : We must come to some first Tree, some first Seed that had no cause of the same kind, no matter of it, but was meer nothing. || Creation doth suppose a production from nothing ; because if you suppose a thing without any real or actual Existence, 'tis not capable of any other production then from nothing : Nothing must be supposed before the World, or we must suppose it Eternal, and that is to deny it to be a Creature, and make it God. The Creation of spiritual Substances, such as Angels and Souls evince this ; those things that are purely spiritual, and consist not of matter, cannot pretend to any Original from Matter, and therefore they rose up from nothing. If spiritual things arose from nothing, much more may corporeal, because they are of a lower nature than spiritual. And he that can create a higher Nature of nothing, can create an inferior nature of nothing. As bodily things are more imperfect than spiritual, so their Creation may be supposed easier than that of spiritual. There was as little need of any matter to be wrought to his hands, to contrive into this visible Fabrick, as there was to erect such an excellent Order as the glorious Cherubims.

2. *This Creation of things from nothing, speaks an infinite power.* The distance between Nothing and Being, hath been alway counted so great, that nothing but an infinite Power can make such distances meet together ; either for Nothing to pass into Being, or Being to return to nothing. To have a thing arise from nothing, was so difficult a Text to those that were ignorant of the Scripture, that they knew not how to fathom it ; and therefore laid it down as a certain Rule. That of nothing, nothing is made ; which is true of a created Power, but not of an uncreated and Almighty Power. A greater distance cannot be imagin'd then that which is between Nothing and Something ; that which hath no being, and that which hath : And a greater Power cannot be imagin'd, then that which brings Something out of Nothing. \* We know not how to conceive a Nothing, and afterwards a Being from that Nothing ; but we must remain swallowed up in admiration of the Cause that gives it being, and acknowledge it to be without any bounds and measures of Greatness and Power. The further any thing is from being, the more immense must that Power be which brings it into being : 'Tis not conceivable that the power of all the Angels in one, can give being to the smallest spire of Grass. To imagine therefore so small a thing as a Bee a Fly, a grain of Corn, or an Atome of Dust to be made of nothing, would stupifie any Creature in the consideration of it : Much more to behold the Heavens with all the Troop of Stars, the Earth with all its embroidery, and the Sea with all her Inhabitants of Fish ; and Man, the noblest Creature of all, to arise out of the Womb of meer Emptiness. Indeed God had not acted as an Almighty Creator if he had stood in need of any Materials, but of his own framing : It had been as much as his Deity was worth if he had not had all within the compass of his own Power, that was necessary to Operation ; if he must have been beholden to something without himself, and above himself, for matter to work upon : Had there been such a necessity, we could not have imagin'd him to be Omnipotent, and consequently not God.

3. *In this the power of God exceeds the power of all natural and rational Agents.* Nature, or the Order of second Causes, hath a vast Power : The Sun generates Flies and other Insects, but of some Matter, the Slime of the Earth or a Dung-hill : The Sun and the Earth bring forth Harvests of Corn, but from Seed first sown in the Earth : Fruits are brought forth, but from the Sap of the Plant. Were there no Seed or Plants in the Earth, the power of the Earth would be idle, and the influence of the Sun insignificant ; whatsoever strength either of them had in their Nature, must be useless without matter to work upon. All the united strength of Nature cannot produce the least thing out of nothing : It may multiply and increase things, by the powerful blessing God gave it at the first erecting of the World, but it cannot create. The *Word* which signifies *Creation*, used in *Gen. 1. 1.* is not



ascrib'd to any *second Cause*, but only to God; a word in that sense as incommunicable to any thing else, as the action it signifies.

*Rational Creatures* can produce admirable Pieces of Art from small things, yet still out of Matter created to their hands. Excellent Garments may be woven, but from the Entrails of a small Silkworm. Delightful and Medicinal Spirits and Essences may be extracted by ingenious Chymists; but out of the Bodies of Plants and Minerals. No Picture can be drawn without Colours; no Statue engraven without Stone, no Building erected without Timber, Stones, and other Materials. Nor can any man raise a thought, without some Matter framed to his hands, or cast into him. Matter is by Nature formed to the hands of all Artificers; they bestow a new Figure upon it, by the help of Instruments, and the product of their own Wit and Skill, but they create not the least particle of Matter; when they want it, they must be supplied, or else stand still, as well as Nature; for none of them, or all together, can make the least Mite or Atom. And when they have wrought all that they can, they will not want some to find a flaw and defect in their work. God as a Creator hath the only Prerogative, to draw what he pleases from nothing, without any defect, without any imperfection: He can raise what Matter he please; enoble it with what form he pleases. Of nothing, nothing can be made by any created Agent: But the Omnipotent Architect of the World, is not under the same necessity, nor is limited to the same Rule, and tied by so short a Tedder as created Nature, or an ingenious, yet feeble, Artificer.

2. It appears, *In raising such variety of Creatures from this barren Womb of Nothing, or from the Matter which he first commanded to appear out of Nothing.* Had there been any preexistent Matter, yet the bringing forth such varieties and diversities of excellent Creatures; some with life, some with sense, and others with reason superadded to the rest; and those out of indisposed and undigested Matter, would argue an infinite Power resident in the first Author of this variegated Fabrick. From this Matter he formed that glorious *Sun*, which every day displays its Glory, scatters its Beams, clears the Air, ripens our Fruits, and maintains the propagation of Creatures in the World. From this Matter he lighted those Torches which he set in the Heaven to qualify the darkness of the Night: From this he compacted those Bodies of Light, which though they seem to us as little sparks, as if they were the Glow-worms of Heaven, yet some of them exceed in greatness this Globe of the Earth on which we live. And the highest of them hath so quick a motion, that some tell us, they run in the space of every hour 42 millions of Leagues. From the same matter he drew the Earth, on which we walk; from thence he extracted the Flowers to adorn it, the Hills to secure the Valleys, and the Rocks to fortify it against the Inundations of the Sea. And on this dull and sluggish Element, he bestowed so great a fruitfulness, to maintain, feed, and multiply so many Seeds of different kinds, and conferred upon those little Bodies of Seeds a power to multiply their kinds in conjunction with the fruitfulness of the Earth to many thousands. From this rude Matter, the Slime or Dust of the Earth, he kneaded the Body of Man, and wrought so curious a Fabrick, fit to entertain a Soul of a heavenly extraction, form'd by the *breath of God* \*. He brought Light out of thick Darkness, and living Creatures, Fish and Fowl, out of *inanimate waters* †, and gave a power of spontaneous motion to things arising from that Matter which had no living motion. To convert one thing into another, is an evidence of infinite Power, as well as creating things of nothing; for the distance between life and not life, is next to that which is between being and not being. God first forms Matter out of Nothing, and then draws upon and from this indisposed *Chaos*, many excellent Pourtraitures. Neither Earth nor Sea were capable of producing living Creatures, without an infinite Power working upon it, and bringing into it such variety and multitude of Forms; and this is called by some *mediate* Creation; as the producing the *Chaos*, which was without form and void, is called *immediate* Creation. Is not the power of the Potter admirable in forming out of temper'd Clay, such varieties of neat and curious Vessels, that after they are fashion'd, and past the Furnace, look as if they were not of any kin to the Matter they are formed of? And is it not the same with the Glass-maker, that from a little melted gelly of Sand and Athes, or the Dust of Flint, can blow up so pure a Body

\* Gen. 2. 7.

† Gen. 1. 20.



dy as Glass, and in such varieties of shapes; and is not the Power of God more admirable, because infinite in speaking out so beautiful a World out of nothing; and such varieties of living Creatures from Matter utterly indispos'd in its own nature for such forms?

3. And this conducts to a *third thing* wherein the power of God appears, in that *He did all this with the greatest ease and facility.*

1. *Without Instruments.* As God made the World without the advice, so without the assistance of any other. *He stretched forth the Heavens alone, and spread abroad the Earth by himself, Isai. 44. 24.* He had no engine, but his Word; no pattern or model but himself. What need can he have of Instruments, that is able to create what Instruments he pleases? Where there is no resistance in the Object, where no need of preparation or instrumental advantage in the Agent; there the actual determination of the Will is sufficient to a production. What Instrument need we to the thinking of a Thought, or an act of our Will? Men indeed cannot act any thing without Tools; the best Artificer must be beholden to something else for his noblest works of Art. The *Carpenter* cannot work without his Rule, and Ax, and Saw, and other Instruments. The *Watch-maker* cannot act without his File and Pliers: But in Creation, there is nothing necessary to Gods bringing forth a World, but a simple act of his Will, which is both the principal cause, and instrumental. He had no Scaffolds to rear it, no Engines to polish it, no Hammers or Mattocks to clod and work it together. 'Tis a miserable Error to measure the actions of an *Infinite Cause* by the imperfect model of a *Finite*, since by his own *Power and Out-stretched Arm, he made the Heaven and the Earth* \*. \* Jer. 32. 17. || Galiend.

|| What excellency would God have in his work above others, if he needed Instruments, as Feeble men do? Every Artificer is counted more admirable, that can frame curious Works with the less matter, fewer Tools and assistances: God uses Instruments in his Works of Providence, not for necessity, but for the display of his Wisdom in the management of them; yet those Instruments were originally framed by him without Instruments. Indeed, some of the *Jews* thought the Angels were the Instruments of God in creating Man, and that those words, *Let us make Man in our own image*, were spoken to Angels. But certainly the Scripture, which denies God any *Counsellor* in the model of Creation †, doth not joyn any Instrument with him in the operation, which is every where ascribed to himself *without created assistance, Isai. 45. 18.* It was not to Angels God spake in that affair; if so, Man was made after the image of Angels, if they were Companions with God in that work: But it is every where said, that *Man was made after the image of God*. Again, the image wherein Man was created, was that of *dominion* over the lower Creatures, as appears *verse 26.* which we find not conferr'd upon Angels; and it is not likely that *Moses* should introduce the Angels, as Gods Privy Counsel, of whose Creation he had not mention'd one syllable. *Let us make Man*, rather signifies *the Trinity*, and not spoken in a Royal style, as some think. Which of the *Jewish Kings* writ in the style, *We*? That was the custom of later Times; and we must not measure the language of Scripture by the style of *Europe*, of a far later date than the penning the History of the Creation. If Angels were his Counsellors in the Creation of the material World, what Instrument had he in the Creation of Angels? If his own Wisdom were the Director, and his own Will the producer of the one; why should we not think, that he acted by his sole Power in the other? 'Tis concluded by most, that the Power of Creation cannot be deriv'd to any Creature, it being a work of Omnipotency: The drawing Something out from Nothing, cannot be communicated without a communication of the Deity it self. The educing things from Nothing exceeds the capacity of any Creature, and the Creature is of too feeble a Nature to be elevated to so high a degree. 'Tis very unreasonable to think, that God needed any such aid. If an Instrument were necessary for God to create the World, then he could not do it without that Instrument: If he could not, he were not then All-sufficient in himself, if he depended upon any thing without himself, for the production or consummation of his Works. And it might be enquired, how that Instrument came into Being: If it began to be, and there was a time when it was not, it must have its Being from the Power of God; and then, why



could not God as well create all things without an Instrument, as create that Instrument without an Instrument? For there was no more Power necessary to a producing the whole without Instruments, than to produce one Creature without an Instrument.

No Creature can in its own nature be an Instrument of Creation. If any such Instrument were used by God, it must be elevated in a miraculous and supernatural way; and what is so an Instrument, is in effect no Instrument; for it works nothing by its own nature, but from an elevation by a Superior nature, and beyond its own nature. All that power in the Instrument is truly the Power of God, and not the power of the Instrument. And therefore what God doth by an Instrument, he could do as well without. If you should see one apply a Straw to Iron, for the cutting of it, and effect it, you would not call the Straw an Instrument in that action, because there was nothing in the nature of the Straw to do it. It was done wholly by some other force, which might have done it as well without the Straw as with it. The narrative of the Creation in *Genesis* removes any Instrument from God. The Plants which are preserved and propagated by the influence of the *Sun*, were created the Day before the *Sun*, viz. on the *Third day*, whereas the Light was collected into the body of the *Sun* on the *Fourth day*\*; to shew, that though the *Plants* do instrumentally owe their yearly beauty and preservation to the *Sun*, yet they did not in any manner owe their Creation to the the Instrumental heat and vigour of it.

\* Gen. 1. 11, 16.

Gen. 1. 3, 5, &c.  
throughout the  
whole Chapter.

2. *God created the World by a Word, by a simple Act of his Will.* The whole Creation is wrought by a Word; God said, *Let there be Light*; and God said, *Let there be a Firmament*. Not that we should understand it of a sensible Word, but to express the easiness of this operation to God, as easie as a word to Man. We must understand it of a Powerful order of his own Will, which is express'd by the *Psalmist* in the nature of a Command, *Psal. 33. 9. He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast*; and *Psal. 148. 5. He commanded and they were created*. At the same instant that he willed them to stand forth, they did stand forth. The efficacious Command of the Creator was the Original of All things; the insensibility of Nothing obeyed the act of his Will. Creation is therefore entituled a *Calling*, *Rom. 4. 17. He calls those things which are not, as if they were*. To Create is no more with God, than to Call; and what he calls, presents it self before him in the same posture that he calls it. He did with more ease make a World, than we can form a Thought. 'Tis the same ease to him to create Worlds, as to decree them: There needs no more than a Resolve to have things wrought at such a time, and they will be, according to his pleasure. This Will is his Power: *Let there be light*, is the Precept of his Will; and *there was light*, is the effect of his Precept. By a Word was the Matter of the Heavens and the Earth framed: By a Word Things separate themselves from the rude Mass into their proper Forms. By a Word, Light associates it self into one body, and forms a *Sun*: By a Word are the Heavens, as it were, bespangled with Stars, and the Earth drest with Flowers: By a Word, is the World both ceil'd and floor'd. One act of his Will formed the World, and perfected its beauty. All the variety and several exploits of his Power were not caused by distinct Words or Acts of Power. God utter'd not distinct Words for distinct Species; as let there be an *Elephant*, and let there be a *Lion*; but as he produced those various Creatures out of one Matter, so by one Word. By one single Command, those varieties of Creatures, with their Clothing, Ornaments, distinct Notes, Qualities, Functions, were brought forth. By one Word, all the *Seeds* of the Earth, with their various Virtues. By one Word, all the *Fish* of the Sea, and *Fowls* of the Air in their distinct Natures, Instincts, Colours. By one Word, all the *Beasts* of the Field, with their varieties. † *Heaven* and *Earth*, *Spiritual* and *Corporeal* Creatures, *Mortal* and *Immortal*, the Greater and the Less, Visible and Invisible, were formed with the same ease. A Word made the Least, and a Word made the Greatest. 'Tis as little difficulty to him to produce the highest Angel, as the lightest Atom. 'Tis enough for the existence of the stateliest *Cherubim*, for God only to will his Being. It was enough for the forming and fixing the *Sun*, to will the compacting of Light into one Body. The creation of the Soul of Man is express'd by *Inspiration*: To shew, that

Gen. 1. 11.

Gen. 1. 20.

Gen. 1. 24.

— August.

Gen. 2. 7.



it is as easie with God to create a Rational Soul, as for Man to breath \*. Breathing <sup>\* Theodor.</sup> is natural to Man, by a communication of Gods goodness; and the creation of the Soul is as easie to God, by virtue of his Almighty Word. As there was no proportion between Nothing and Being; so there was as little proportion between a Word and such glorious Effects. A meer Voice, coming from an Omnipotent Will, was capable to produce such Varieties, which Angels and Men have seen in all Ages of the World; and this without weariness. What labour is there in Willing, what pain could there be in speaking a Word? *Isai. 40. 28. The Creator of the ends of the Earth is not weary.* And though he be said to *Rest* after the Creation, 'tis to be meant a Rest from work, not a repose from weariness. So great is the Power of God, that without any Matter, without any Instruments, he could create many Worlds, and with the same ease as he made this.

4. I might add also, the appearance of this Power in the *Instantaneous production of things*. The ending of his Word was not only the beginning, but the perfection of every thing he spake into Being; not several Words to several parts and Members, but one Word, one breath of his Mouth, one act of his Will to the whole species of the Creatures, and to every Member in each Individual. Heaven and Earth were created in a moment, *Six days* went to their disposal; and that comly Order we observe in the World was the work of a Week: The Matter was formed as soon as God had spoken the word; and in every part of the Creation, as soon as God spake the word, *Let it be so*, the answer immediately is, *It was so*; which notes the present standing up of the Creature according to the act of his Will: And therefore † One observes, that *Let there be light*, and *there was light*, in the *Hebrew* are the same words, without any alteration of Letter or Point, only the conjunctive Particle added *אור ימי אור ימי* *Let there be light*, and *let there be light*, to shew, that the same instant of the speaking the Divine word, was the appearance of the Creature: So great was the Authority of his Will. <sup>Gen. 1. 1. 2. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.</sup>

2. We are to shew *Gods Power in the Government of the World*. As God decreed from Eternity the Creation of things in time, so he decreed from Eternity the particular ends of Creatures, and their operations respecting those ends. Now as there was need of his Power to execute his Decree of Creation, there is also need of his Power to execute his Decree about the manner of Government. || All Government is an act of the Understanding, Will and Power. Prudence to design belongs to the Understanding, the election of the Means belongs to the Will, and the accomplishment of the whole is an act of Power. 'Tis a hard matter to determine which is most necessary: Wisdom stands in as much need of Power, to perfect; as Power doth of Wisdom, to model and draw out a scheme; though Wisdom directs, Power must effect. Wisdom and Power are distinct things among Men: A Poor man in a Cottage may have more Prudence to Advise, than a Privy Counsellor; and a Prince more power to act, than wisdom to conduct. A Pilot may direct though he be lame, and cannot climb the Masts and spread the Sails: But God is wanting in nothing; neither in Wisdom to design, nor in Will to determine, nor in Power to accomplish. His Wisdom is not feeble, nor his Power foolish: A Powerful wisdom could not act what it would, and a Foolish power would act more than it should. The Power exprest in his Government, is shadow'd forth in the Living Creatures, which are Gods Instruments in it. 'Tis said, *Everyone of them had four faces*; that of a *Man* to signify Wisdom; of a *Lion*, *Eagle*, the strongest among Birds, to signify their Courage and Strength to perform their offices. <sup>|| Suarez, 7. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.</sup>

This Power is evident in the *Natural, Moral, Gracious* Government.

There is a *Natural* Providence, which consists in the preservation of all things, propagation of them by Corruptions and Generations, and in a Co-operation with them in their motions to attain their ends.

*Moral* Government is of the Hearts and Actions of Men.

*Gracious* Government, as respecting the Church.

1. His Power is evident in *Natural* Government.

1. In *Preservation*. God is the great *Father* of the World, to nourish it as well as create it \*. Man and Beast would perish if there were not Herbs for their food; <sup>\* Dan. 1. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.</sup>



Psal. 66. 5.  
\* CIPD

Gen. 1. 11.

Verse 16.

Isa. 40. 12.

† Daille  
Melange,  
Part 2. p. 457.  
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food; and Herbs would wither and perish, if the Earth were not watered with fruitful showers. This some of the *Heathens* acknowledg'd, in their worshipping God under the image of an Ox, a useful Creature, by reason of its strength, to which we owe so much of our food in Corn. Hence God is styled the *Preserver of Man and Beast*. Hence the *Jews* called God \* *Place*; because he is the subsistence of all things. By the same Word whereby he gave Being to things, he gives to them continuance and duration in Being to such a term of time. As they were created by his word, they are supported by his word, *Heb. 1. 3.* The same powerful Fiat, *Let the Earth bring forth Grass*, when the Plants peep'd upon Man out of nothing, is express'd every Spring, when they begin to lift up their heads from their naked Roots and Winter graves. The resurrection of Light every morning, the reviving the pleasure of all things to the eye; the watering the Vallies from the Mountain Springs; the curbing the natural appetite of the Waters from covering the Earth; every draught that the Beasts drink, every lodging the Fowls have, every bit of Food for the sustenance of Man and Beast, is ascribed to the Opening of his hand, the diffusing of his Power, *Psal. 104. 27, &c.* as much as the first Creation of things, and endowing them with their particular nature: Whence the Plants, which are so serviceable, are called the *Trees of the Lord*, of *Jehovah*, that hath only Being and Power in himself. The whole *Psalms* is but the description of his preserving, as the first of *Genesis* is of his creating Power. 'Tis by this Power Angels have so many Thousand years remained in the power of understanding and willing. By this Power things distant in their natures have been joyned together, a Spiritual Soul and a Dusty Body knit in a Marriage knot. By this Power the Heavenly Bodies have for so many Ages roul'd in their Spheres, and the Tumultuous Elements have persisted in their order: By this hath the Matter of the World been to this day continued, and as capable of entertaining forms as it was at the first Creation. What an amazing sight would it be to see a man hold a Pillar of the Exchange upon one of his Fingers? What is this to the Power of God, who holds the waters in the hollow of his hand, metes out the Heaven with a span, and weighs the Mountains in scales, and the Hills in a balance?

|| The preserving the Earth from the violence of the Sea is a plain instance of this Power. How is that raging Element kept pent within those lists where he first lodged it; continues its course in its Channel without overflowing the Earth, and dashing in pieces the lower part of the Creation? The natural situation of the Water is to be above the Earth, because it is lighter; and to be immediately under the Air, because it is heavier than that thinner Element. Who restrains this natural quality of it, but that God that first formed it? The word of Command at first, *Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further*, keeps those Waters linkt together in their Den, that they may not ravage the Earth, but be useful to the Inhabitants of it. And when once it finds a gap to enter, what power of Earth can hinder its passage? How fruitless sometimes is all the Art of Man to send it to its proper Channel, when once it hath spread its mighty waves over some Countries, and trampled part of the inhabited Earth under its feet? It hath triumphed in its victory, and withstood all the power of Man to conquer its force. 'Tis only the Power of God that doth bridle it from spreading it self over the whole Earth. And that his Power might be more manifest, he hath set but a weak and small bank against it. Though he hath bounded it in some places by mighty Rocks, which lift up their heads above it, yet in most places by feeble Sand. How often is it seen in every stormy motion, when the waves boil high and roul furiously, as if they would swallow up all the neighbouring Houses upon the Shoar; when they come to touch those Sandy limits, they bow their heads, fall flat, and sink into the Lap whence they were raised; and seem to foam with Anger that they can march no further, but must split themselves at so weak an obstacle? Can the Sand be thought to be the cause of this? The weakness of it gives no footing to such a thought. Who can apprehend, that an enraged Army should retire upon the opposition of a Straw in an Infants hand? Is it the nature of the Water? Its retirement is against the natural quality of it; pour but a little upon the ground, and you always see it spread it self: No cause can be rendred in



in nature; 'tis a standing Monument of the Power of God in the preservation of the World, and ought to be more taken notice of by us in this Island, surrounded with it, than by some other Countries in the World.

1. *We find nothing hath power to preserve it self.* Doth not every Creature upon Earth require the assistance of some other for its maintenance? *Can the Rush grow up without mire; can the flag grow up without water? Job 8.11.* Can Man or Beast maintain it self without grain from the bowels of the Earth? Would not every Man tumble into the grave, without the aid of other Creatures to nourish him? Whence do these Creatures receive that virtue of supplying him nourishment, but from the Sun and Earth; and whence do they derive that virtue, but from the *Creator of all things*? And should he but slack his hand, how soon would they and all their qualities perish, and the links of the World fall in pieces, and dash one another into their first Chaos and confusion? All Creatures indeed have an appetite to preserve themselves, they have some knowledge of the outward Means for their preservation; so have irrational Animals a natural instinct, as well as men have some skill to avoid things that are hurtful, and apply things that are helpful: But what thing in the World can preserve it self by an inward influx into its own Being? All things want such a Power without Gods, *Fiat, Let it be so*: Nothing but is destitute of such a power for its own preservation, as much as it is of a power for its own creation. Were there any true Power for such a work, what need of so many External helps from things of an inferior nature to that which is preserved by them?

No created thing hath a Power to preserve any decayed Being. Who can lay claim to such a virtue, as to recal a withering Flower to its former beauty, to raise the head of a drooping Plant, or put life into a gasping Worm when it is expiring; or put impair'd Vitals into their former posture? Not a Man upon Earth, nor an Angel in Heaven, can pretend to such a virtue; they may be spectators, but not Assistants, and are in this case *Physicians of no value*.

2. 'Tis therefore *the same Power preserves things which at first created them.* The Creature doth as much depend upon God in the first instant of its Being, for its preservation; as it did when it was nothing, for its production and creation into Being. \* As the continuance of a Thought of our Mind depends upon the power of our Mind, as well as the first framing of that Thought. There is as little difference between Creating and Preserving Power, as there is between the power of mine Eye to begin an act of Vision and continue that act of Vision; as to cast my Eye upon an Object and continue it upon that Object: As the first act is caused by the Eye, so the duration of that act is preserved by the Eye; shut the Eye and the act of Vision perishes, divert the Eye from that Object, and that act of Vision is exchanged for another. And therefore the Preservation of things is commonly called a Continual creation: And certainly it is no less, if we understand it of a Preservation by an inward influence into the Being of things.

† 'Tis one and the same action invariably continued, and obtaining its force every moment: The same action whereby he created them of Nothing, and which every moment hath a virtue to produce a thing out of nothing, if it were not yet extant in the World: It remains the same without any diminution throughout the whole time wherein any thing doth remain in the World. For all things would return to Nothing, if God did not keep them up in the elevation and state to which he at first raised them by his Creative Power. *Acts 17.28. In him we live and have our being.* By him, or by the same Power whence we deriv'd our Being, are our lives maintained: As it was his Almighty Power whereby we were, after we had been nothing; so it is the same Power whereby we now are, after he hath made us something.

Certainly all things have no less a dependance on God, than Light upon the Sun, which vanisheth and hides its head upon the withdrawing of the Sun. And should God suspend that powerful Word, whereby he erected the frame of the World, it would sink down to what it was, before he commanded it to stand up. There needs no new act of Power to reduce things to Nothing, but the cessation of that Omnipotent influx: When the appointed time set them for their Being comes to a period, they faint and bend down their heads to their dissolution, they

• return

\* Lessius, de  
Perf. divin.  
p. 69.

† Lessius, de  
Sum. bon. p. 580;  
581, 582.



return to their elements and perish. *Psalm 104. 29. Thou hidest thy face, and they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust.* That which was Nothing cannot remain on this side Nothing, but by the same Power that first called it out of Nothing. As when God withdrew his concurring Power from the Fire, its quality ceas'd to act upon the *Three Children*: so if he withdraws his Sustaining Power from the Creature, its Nature will cease to be.

Gen. 1. 22, 23.

2. It appears in *Propagation*. That powerful word, *Increase and multiply*, pronounced at the first Creation, hath spread it self over every part of the World; every Animal in the World, in the formation of every one of them. From *Two of a kind*, how great a number of individuals and single Creatures have been multiplied, to cover the face of the Earth in their continued successions? What a world of Plants spring up from the womb of a dry Earth, moistened by the influence of a Cloud, and hatcht by the beams of the Sun? How admirable an instance of his propagating Power is it, that from a little Seed a massy Root should strike into the bowels of the Earth, a tall body and thick branches, with Leaves and Flowers of various colours; should break through the surface of the Earth, and mount up towards Heaven, when in the Seed you neither smell the scent, nor see any firmness of a Tree, nor behold any of those Colours which you view in the Flowers that the years produce? A Power not to be imitated by any Creature. How astonishing is it, that a small Seed, whereof many will not amount to the weight of a grain, should spread it self into Leaves, Bark, Fruit of a vast weight, and multiply it self into Millions of Seeds? What Power is that, that from one Man and Woman hath multiplied Families, and from Families, stockt the World with People? Consider the living Creatures, as formed in the womb of their several kinds; every one is a wonder of Power. The *Psalmist* instanceth in the forming and propagation of Man. *Psalm 139. 14. I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvelous are thy works.* The forming of the Parts distinctly in the Womb, the bringing forth into the World every particular Member, is a rowl of wonders, of Power. That so fine a structure as the Body of Man should be polish'd in the lower parts of the Earth, as he calls the *Womb*, verse 15. in so short a time, with Members of a various form and usefulness, each labouring in their several functions. Can any man give an exact account of the manner, *how the Bones do grow in the womb*: 'Tis unknown to the Father, and no less hid from the Mother, and the wisest Men cannot search out the depths of it. 'Tis one of the Secret works of an Omnipotent Power, secret in the manner, though open in the effect. So that we must ascribe it to God, as *Job* doth, *Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about.* Thy hands which formed Heaven, have formed every Part, every Member, and wrought me like a Mighty workman. The Heavens are said to be the *work of Gods hands*, and Man is here said to be no less. The forming and propagation of Man from that Earthy matter, is no less a wonder of Power, than the structure of the World from a rude and indispos'd Matter. || A *Heathen Philosopher* descants elegantly upon it: *Dost thou understand (my Son) the forming of Man in the womb; who erected that noble Fabrick; who carv'd the Eyes, the Christal-windows of light, and the conductors of the Body; who bor'd the Nostrils and Ears, those Loop-holes of scents and sounds; who stretch'd out and knit the Sinews and Ligaments for the fastning of every Member; who cast the hollow Veins, the Channels of Blood; set and strengthned the Bones, the Pillars and Rafter of the Body; who digg'd the Pores, the sinks to expel the filth; who made the Heart, the repository of the Soul, and formed the Lungs like a Pipe? What Mother, what Father wrought these things? No, none but the Almighty God, who made all things according to his pleasure; 'tis He who propagates this Noble piece from a pile of Dust. Who is born by his own advice; who gives stature, features, sence, wit, strength, speech, but God?*

Eccles. 11. 5.

Job 10. 8.

† Trismegist, in *Serm. Greek* in the Temple, p. 57.

'Tis no less a wonder, that a little Infant can live so long in a dark Sink, in the midst of filth, without breathing: And the education of it out of the Womb is no less a wonder, than the forming, increase, nourishment of it in that Cell. A wonder, that the life of the Infant is not the death of the Mother, or the life of the Mother



Mother the death of the Infant. This little Creature, when it springs up from such small beginnings by the Power of God, grows up to be one of the Lords of the World, to have a Dominion over the Creatures, and propagates its kind in the same manner: All this is unaccountable without having recourse to the Power of God in the government of the Creatures.

And to add to this wonder, Consider also what multitudes of Formations and Births there are at one time all over the World, in every of which the Finger of God is at work; and it will speak an unwearied Power. 'Tis admirable in one Man, more in a Town of Men, still more in a greater and larger Kingdom, a vaster World; there is a Birth for every Hour in this City, were but 168 born in a Week, though the *Weekly Bills* mention more: What is this City to Three Kingdoms; what Three Kingdoms to a populous World? *Eleven Thousand and eighty* will make one for every Minute in the Week; what is this to the Weekly propagation in all the Nations of the Universe, besides the generation of all the Living Creatures in that Space, which are the *works of Gods fingers* as well as Man? What will be the result of this, but the notion of an unconceivable, unwearied Almightyness, alway active, alway operating?

3. It appears in the *Motions of all Creatures*. All things *live and move in him*; by the same Power that Creatures have their Beings, they have their Motions: They have not only a Being by his powerful Command, but they have their minutely Motion by his Powerful concurrence. Nothing can act without the Almighty influx of God, no more than it can exist without the Creative Word of God. 'Tis true indeed, the ordering of all Motions to his Holy ends, is an act of Wisdom; but the motion it self whereby those Ends are attained, is a work of his Power.

1. *God as the first Cause hath an influence into the motions of all second Causes*. As all the Wheels in a Clock are moved in their different motions, by the force and strength of the principal and primary Wheel; if there be any defect in that, or if that stand still, all the rest languish and stand idle the same moment. All Creatures are his Instruments, his Engines, and have no Spirit, but what he gives, and what he assists. Whatsoever Nature works, God works in Nature; Nature is the Instrument, God is the Supporter, Director, Mover of Nature; that what the Prophet said in another case, may be the language of universal Nature, *Lord, thou hast wrought all our works in us*, *Isai. 26. 12*. They are *our* works subjectively, efficiently, as second causes; *Gods* works originally, concurrently. The *Sun* moved not in the Valley of *Ajalon* for the space of many hours, in the time of *Joshua*; nor did the *Fire* exercise its consuming quality upon the *Three Children*, *+ Josh 10. 13.* in *Neluchadnezzars Furnace* ||: He withdrew not his supporting Power from || *Dan. 3. 25.* their Being, for then they had vanished, but his influencing Power from their qualities, whereby their motion ceas'd, till he return'd his influential concurrence to them; which evidenceth, that without a perpetual derivation of Divine Power, the *Sun* could not run one stride or inch of its race, nor the *Fire* devour one grain of light Chaff, or an inch of Straw. Nothing without his sustaining Power can continue in Being; nothing without his co-working Power can exercise one mite of those qualities it is possessed of. All Creatures are wound up by him, and his hand is constantly upon them, to keep them in perpetual motion.

2. Consider the *variety of motions in a single Creature*. How many motions are there in the Vital parts of a Man, or in any other Animal, which a Man knows not, and is unable to number? The renewed motion of the Lungs, the *Systoles* and *Diastoles* of the Heart; the Contractions and Dilatations of the Heart, whereby it spouts out and takes in Blood; the power of Concoction in the Stomach; the motion of the Blood in the Veins, &c. all which were not only settled by the Powerful hand of God, but are upheld by the same, preserv'd and influenc'd in every distinct motion by that Power that stamp't them with that Nature. To every one of those there is not only the sustaining Power of God holding up their Natures, but the motive Power of God concurring to every motion; for if we move in him as well as we live in him, then every particle of our motion is exercised by his concurring Power, as well as every moment of our Life supported by his preserving Power. What an infinite variety of motions is there in the whole World in universal Na-



ture, to all which God concurs, all which he conducts, even the motions of the meanest as well as the greatest Creatures, which demonstrate the indefatigable Power of the Governour. 'Tis an Infinite Power which doth act in so many varieties, whereby the Soul forms every Thought, the Tongue speaks every Word, the Body exerts every Action. What an Infinite Power is that which presides over the birth of all things, concurs with the motion of the Sap in the Tree, Rivers on the Earth, Clouds in the Air, every drop of Rain, fleece of Snow, crack of Thunder? Not the least motion in the World, but is under an actual influence of this Almighty Mover.

And lest any should scruple the Concurrence of God to so many Varieties of the Creatures motion, as a thing utterly unconceivable; let them consider the *Sun*, a natural image and shadow of the Perfections of God; doth not the power of that finite Creature extend it self to various Objects at the same moment of time? How many *Insects* doth it animate, as *Flies*, &c. at the same moment throughout the World? How many several *Plants* doth it erect at its appearance in the *Spring*, whose Roots lay mourning in the Earth all the foregoing Winter? What multitudes of Spires of *Grass*, and nobler Flowers, doth it Midwife in the same hour? It warms the *Air*, melts the *Blood*, cherishes Living Creatures of various kinds, in distinct places, without tiring: And shall the God of this *Sun* be less than his Creature?

3. And since I speak of the *Sun*, consider the Power of God in the Motion of it. \* The vastness of the *Sun* is computed to be at the least 166 Times bigger than the Earth, and its distance from the Earth, some tell us to be about Four Millions of Miles; whence it follows, that it is whirl'd about the World with that swiftmess, that in the space of an Hour it runs a Million of Miles, which is as much as if it should move round about the surface of the Earth Fifty times in one hour; which vastness exceeds the swiftmess of a Bullet shot out of a Canon, which is computed to fly not above Three mile in a Minute: So that the *Sun* runs further in one Hours space, than a Bullet can in Five thousand, if it were kept in motion; so that if it were near the Earth, the swiftmess of its motion would shatter the whole frame of the World and dash it in pieces; so that the *Psalmist* may well say, *It runs a race like a strong Man*, *Psal.* 19.5. What an Incomprehensible Power is that which hath communicated such a strength and swiftmess to the *Sun*, and doth daily influence its Motion; especially since after all those years of its motion, wherein one would think it should have spent it self, we behold it every day as vigorous as *Adam* did in *Paradise*, without limping, without shattering it self, or losing any thing of its natural Spirits in its unwearied motion. How great must that Power be, which hath kept this great body so intire, and thus swiftly moves it every day?

Is it not now an Argument of Omnipotency, to keep all the strings of Nature in tune; to wind them up to a due pitch for the harmony he intended by them; to keep things that are contrary from that Confusion they would naturally fall into; to prevent those Jarrings which would naturally result from their various and snarling qualities; to preserve every Being in its true nature; to propagate every kind of Creature; order all the Operations, even the meanest of them, when there are such innumerable Varieties?

But let us consider, that this Power of preserving things in their station and motion, and the renewing of them is more stupendous, than that which we commonly call *Miraculous*.

We call those *Miracles*, which are wrought out of the track of Nature, and contrary to the usual stream and current of it; which Men wonder at, because they seldom see them, and hear of them as things rarely brought forth in the World; when the truth is, there is more of Power exprest in the ordinary station and motion of Natural causes, than in those extraordinary exertings of Power. Is not more Power signaliz'd in that whirling motion of the *Sun* every hour for so many Ages, than in the suspending of its motion one Day, as it was in the days of *Jehoiakim*? That Fire should continually ravage and consume, and greedily swallow up every thing that is offer'd to it, seems to be the effect of as admirable a Power, as the stopping of its appetite a few moments, as in the case of the *Three Children*?

\* A\* Lapide,  
in 1. cap. Gen.  
16.  
Lefsius, de  
Perf. div. in,  
p. 90, 91.  
\* Lefsius, de  
Providen.  
p. 623.  
Voss. de Idol.  
lib. 2. cap. 2.



Is not the rising of some small Seeds from the ground, with a multiplication of their numerous posterity, an effect of as great a Power, as our Saviours feeding many Thousands with a *few Loaves*, by a secret augmentation of them? Is not the Chymical producing so pleasant and delicious a Fruit as the *Grape*, from a dry Earth, insipid Rain, and a sour Vine, as admirable a token of Divine Power, as our Saviours turning *Water into Wine*? Is not the cure of Diseases by the application of a simple inconsiderable Weed, or a slight Infusion, as wonderful in itself, as the Cure of it by a powerful word? What if it be naturally design'd to heal, what is that Nature, who gave that Nature, who maintains that Nature, who conducts it, cooperates with it? Doth it work of itself, and by its own strength; why not then equally in all, in one as well as another? Miracles indeed affect more, because they testify the immediate operation of God without the concurrence of *second Causes*; not that there is more of the Power of God shining in them, than in the other.

## II. This Power is evident in Moral Government.

1. In the restraint of the Malicious nature of the Devil. Since *Satan* hath the Power of an Angel, and the Malice of a Devil, what safety would there be for our Persons from destruction, what security for our Goods from rising, by this invisible, potent, and envious Spirit, if his Power were not restrain'd and his Malice curb'd, by one more Mighty than himself? How much doth he envy God, the glory of his Creation; and Man, the use and benefit of it? How desirous would he be in regard of his passion, how able in regard of his strength and subtilty; to overthrow or infect all Worship, but what was directed to himself; to manage all things according to his lusts, turn all thing topsie-turvy, plague the World, burn Cities, Houses, plunder us of the supports of Nature, waste Kingdoms, &c. if he were not held in a Chain, as a ravenous Lion, or a furious wild Horse, by the Creator and Governour of the World? What remedy could be used by Man against the activity of this unseen and swift Spirit? The World could not subsist under his Malice; he would practise the same things upon All, as he did upon *Job*, when he had got leave from his Governour; turn the Swords of Men into one anothers bowels; send Fire from Heaven upon the Fruits of the Earth and the Cattle, intended for the use of Man: Raise Winds, to shake and tear our Houses upon our Heads; daub our Bodies with Scabs and Boils, and let all the humors in our Blood loose upon us. He that envied *Adam* a *Paradise*, doth envy us the pleasure of enjoying its out-works: If we were not destroyed by him, we should live in a continued vexation by *Spectrums* and *Apparitions*, affrighting sounds and noise; as some think the *Egyptians* did in that *three days* Darkness: He would be alway winnowing us, as he desired to winnow *Peter*. But God overmasters his strength, that he cannot move a hairs breadth beyond his Tedder; not only he is unable to touch an Upright *Job*, but to lay his fingers upon one of the Unbelieving *Gadarens* forbidden and filthy *Swine* without special licence. When he is cast out of one place, he walks through dry places seeking rest, new objects for his Malicious designs, but finding none, till God lets loose the reins upon him for a new employment. Though *Satans* Power be great, yet God suffers him not to tempt as much as his Diabolical appetite would, but as much as Divine Wisdom thinks fit: And the Divine Power tempers the others active Malice, and gives the Creature victory, where the Enemy intended spoil and captivity. How much stronger is God, than all the Legions of Hell; as he that holds a *strong man* from effecting his purpose, testifies more ability than his Adversary? How doth he lock him up for a *Thousand years* in a *Pownd*, which he cannot leap over? and this restraint is wrought partly by blinding the Devil in his designs, partly by denying him concurrence to his motion: As he hindered the active quality of the Fire upon the *Three Children*, by withdrawing his power, which was necessary to the motion of it; and his power is as necessary for the motion of the Devil, as for that of any other Creature. Sometimes he makes him to confess him against his own interest, as *Apollo's* Oracle confess'd †. And though when the Devil was cast out of the possessed person, he publicly owned Christ to be the *Holy one of God*, *Mark* 1.24. to render him suspected by the People of having commerce with the Unclean Spirits; yet this he could not do without the leave and permission of God, that

Faucher.  
for All. 3. 2.  
p. 47.

Luke 22.31.

Mar. 8. 31.  
Luke 11. 24.

Luke 11. 22.

Rev. 20. 3.

† Ceteros dice  
as eos esse deos.  
Grot. 1. 2. 2.  
rel. 2. 4.



Job 12. 16.

the power of Christ in stopping his mouth and imposing silence upon him might be evidenced; and that it reaches to the Gates of Hell, as well as to the quieting of Winds and Waves. This is a part of the Strength, as well as the Wisdom of God, that *the deceived and the deceiver are his*. Wisdom to defeat, and Power to over-rule his most Malicious designs to his own glory.

Job 15. 16.

Rom. 3. 10, &amp;c.

2. *In the restraint of the Natural Corruption of Men.* Since the *impetus* of Original Corruption runs in the Blood, conveyed down from *Adam* to the Veins of all his Posterity, and universally diffus'd in all Mankind; what wrack and havoc would it make in the World, if it were not suppress'd by this Divine Power, which presides over the hearts of Men? Man is so wretched by Nature, that nothing but what is vile and pernicious can drop from him. *Man drinks Iniquity like water*, being by Nature *abominable and filthy*. He greedily swallows all matter for Iniquity, every thing suitable to the mire and poyson in his Nature, and would sprout it out with all fierceness and insolence. God himself gives us the description of Mans Nature, *Gen. 6. 5.* that he hath not one good *imagination at any time*. And the *Apostle* from the *Psalmist* dilates and comments upon it: *There is none righteous, no not one; their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood, &c.* This Corruption is equal in all, natural to all; 'tis not more poysonous or more fierce in one Man, than in another. The Root of all Men is the same; all the Branches therefore do equally possess the Villanous nature of the Root. No Child of *Adam* can by Natural descent be better than *Adam*, or have less of baseness and vileness, and venom than *Adam*. How fruitful would this loathsome Lake be in all kind of steams? What unbridled Licentiousness and head-strong Fury would triumph in the World, if the Power of God did not interpose it self to lock down the Flood-gates of it? What rooting up of Humane society would there be; how would the World be drencht in Blood, the number of Malefactors be greater, than that of Apprehenders and Punishers? How would the prints of Natural Laws be raz'd out of the heart, if God should leave Humane nature to it self? Who can read the *first Chapter* to the *Romans*, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 *Verses* without acknowledging this Truth; where there is a *Catalogue* of those Villanies which followed upon Gods pulling up the Sluces, and letting the malignity of their Inward Corruption have its natural course? If God did not hold back the fury of Man, his Garden would be over-run, his Vine rooted up; the Inclinations of Men would hurry them to the worst of Wickedness. How great is that Power, that curbs, bridles, or changes, as many head-strong Horses at once and every minute, as there are Sons of *Adam* upon the Earth? The *floods lift up their waves; the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many Waters, yea than the mighty waves of the Sea*; that doth hush and pen in the turbulent Passions of Men.

Psal. 93. 3, 4.

3. *In the ordering and framing the hearts of Men to his own ends.* That must be an Omnipotent hand that grasps and contains the Hearts of all Men; the Heart of the Meanest person, as well as of the most towering Angel, and turns them as he pleases, and makes them sometime ignorantly, sometime knowingly concur to the accomplishment of his own purposes: When the Hearts of Men are so numerous, their Thoughts so various and different from one another, yet he hath a Key to those Millions of Hearts, and with Infinite Power guided by as Infinite Wisdom, he draws them into what Channels he pleases for the gaining his own ends. Though the *Jews* had embred their hands in the Blood of our *Saviour*, and their Rage was yet reeking-hot against his Followers, God bridled their Fury in the Churches Infancy, till it had got some strength, and cast a Terror upon them by the Wonders wrought by the *Apostles*, *Acts 2. 43.* *And fear came upon every Soul, and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles.* Was there not the same reason in the nature of the Works our *Saviour* wrought, to point them to the *Finger of God* and calm their rage? Yet did not the Power of God work upon their Passions in those Miracles, nor stop the impetuosity of the Corruption resident in their hearts. Yet now those who had the boldness to attack the Son of God and nail him to the Cross, are frighted at the Appearance of *Twelve unarmed Apostles*; as the Sea seems to be afraid when it approacheth the bounds of the feeble Sand. How did God bend the Hearts of the *Egyptians* to the

*Israelites,*



*Israelites*, and turn them to that point, as to lend their most costly Vessels, their precious Jewels, and rich Garments, to supply those whom they had just before tyrannically loaded with their Chains\*? When a great part of an Army came upon *Jehoshaphat* to dispatch him into another World, how doth God in a trice touch their hearts, and move them by a secret instinct at once to *depart from him*? As if you should see a numerous flight of Birds in a moment turn wing another way, by a sudden and joynt consent. When he gave *Saul* a Kingdom, he gave him a Spirit fit for Government, and gave him another heart; and brought the People to submit to his yoke, who a little before wandred about the Land upon no nobler employment than the seeking of *Asses*. 'Tis no small remark of the Power of God, to make a number of strong and discontented Persons, and delirious enough of liberty, to bend their Necks under the yoke of Government, and submit to the Authority of One, and that of their own Nature, often weaker and unwise than the most of them; and many times, an Oppressor and Invader of their Rights. Upon this account *David* calls God his *Fortress, Tower, Shield*; all terms of *Strength*, in subduing the People under him. 'Tis the Mighty hand of God, that links Princes and People together in the bands of Government. The same hand that allwageth the Waves of the Sea, suppresseth the Tumults of the People.

### III. It appears in his Gracious and Judicial Government.

1. In his Gracious Government. In the Deliverance of his Church: He is the strength of *Israel*, and hath protected his Little Flock in the midst of Wolves; and maintained their standing, when the strongest Kingdoms have sunk, and the best joynted States have been broken in pieces. When Judgments have ravaged Countries, and torn up the Mighty, as a tempestuous Wind hath often done the tallest Trees, which seem'd to threaten Heaven with their Tops, and dare the Storm with the depth of their Roots, when yet the Vine and Rose bushes have stood firm, and been seen in their beauty next morning. The state of the Church hath outlived the most flourishing Monarchies; when there hath been a mighty knot of Adversaries against her; when the Bulls of *Babylon* have pusht her, and the whole Tribe of the Dragon have sharpen'd their weapons, and edg'd their Malice; when the voice was strong, and the hopes high to raze her foundation even with the ground; when Hell hath roar'd; when the wit of the World hath contriv'd, and the strength of the World hath attempted her ruine; when Decrees have been past against her, and the Powers of the World arm'd for the execution of them; when her Friends have droop'd and skulk'd in Corners; when there was no Eye to pity, and no Hand to assist, help hath come from Heaven; her Enemies have been defeated, Kings have brought gifts to her and rear'd her; Tears have been wip'd off her Cheeks, and her very Enemies, by an unseen Power, have been forc'd to court her, whom before they would have devour'd quick. The Devil and his Armies have sneakt into their Den, and the Church hath triumphed when she hath been upon the brink of the Grave. Thus did God send a mighty Angel to be the Executioner of *Senacherib's* Army, and the Protector of *Jerusalem*, who run his Sword into the hearts of Eighty Thousand, when they were ready to swallow up his beloved City.

When the Knife was at the Throats of the Jews in *Shushan*, by a powerful hand it was turned into the hearts of their Enemies. With what an Out-stretched Arm were the *Israelites* freed from the Egyptian yoke? When *Pharaoh* had muster'd a great Army to pursue them, assisted with Six hundred Chariots of War, the Red Sea obstructed their passage before, and an enraged Enemy trod on their rear; when the fearful *Israelites* despair'd of Deliverance, and the insolent Egyptian assured himself of his Revenge; God stretches out his irresistible Arm, to defeat the Enemy and assist his People; he strikes down the Wolves, and preserves the Flock. God restrain'd the Egyptian Enmity against the *Israelites* till they were at the brink of the Red Sea, and then lets them follow their humer and pursue the Fugitives, that his Power might more gloriously shine forth in the Deliverance of the one, and the Destruction of the other. God might have brought *Israel* out of Egypt in the time of those Kings, that had remembered the good Service of *Joseph* to their Country; but he leaves them till the Reign of



a cruel Tyrant, suffers them to be Slaves, that they might by his sole Power be Conquerors; which had had no appearance, had there been a willing dismission of them at the first summons. *Exod. 9. 16. In very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew my Power, and that my Name might be declared throughout all the Earth.* I have permitted thee to rise up against my People, and keep them in Captivity, that thou might'st be an occasion for the manifestation of my Power in their rescue; and whilst thou art obstinate to enslave them, I will stretch out my Arm to deliver them, and make my Name famous among the *Gentiles*, in the wrack of thee and thy Host in the *Red Sea*. The Deliverance of the Church hath not been in one Age or in one Part of the World, but God hath signaliz'd his Power in all Kingdoms where she hath had a footing: As he hath guided her in all places by one Rule, animated her by one Spirit; so he hath protected her by the same Arm of Power.

When the *Roman Emperors* bandied all their Force against Her for about *Three hundred years*, they were further from effecting her ruine at the end, than when they first attempted it: The Church grew under their Sword, and was hatcht under the Wings of the *Roman Eagle*, which were spread to destroy her. The *Ark* was elevated by the Deluge; and the Waters the Devil poured out to drown Her, did but slime the Earth for a new increase of her. She hath sometime been beaten down, and, like *Lazarus*, hath seemed to lie in the Grave for some days, that the Power of God might be more visible in her sudden resurrection, and lifting up her head above the Throne of her Persecutors.

*Gen. 7. 17, 19,*  
20.

2. *In his Judicial proceedings.* The Deluge was no small testimony of his Power, in opening the Cisterns of Heaven, and pulling up the Sluces of the Sea. He doth but call for the *waters of the Sea*, and they *pour themselves upon the face of the Earth*, *Amos 9. 6.* In *Forty days* time the Waters overtopped the highest Mountains *fifteen Cubits*; and by the same Power he afterwards reduc'd the Sea to its proper Channel, as a roaring Lion into his Den. A shower of Fire from Heaven upon *Sodom* and the Cities of the Plain, was a signal display of his Power, either in creating it on the sudden for the execution of his Righteous sentence, or sending down the Element of Fire, contrary to its nature (which affects ascent) for the punishment of Rebels against the light of Nature.

How often hath he ruin'd the most flourishing Monarchies, led Princes away spoil'd, and overthrown the Mighty? Which *Job* makes an Argument of his Strength, *Job 12. 13, 14.* Troops of unknown People, the *Goths* and *Vandals*, broke the *Romans*, a Warlike People, and hurl'd down all before them. They could not have had the thought to succeed in such an Attempt, unless God had given them strength and motion, for the executing his Judicial Vengeance upon the People of his Wrath.

*Exod. 8. 3.*

*Exod. 7. 20.*

How did he evidence his Power, by dawbing the Throne of *Pharaoh*, and his Chamber of Presence, as well as the Houses of his Subjects, with the slime of *Frogs*; turning their *Waters* into *Blood*, and their *Dust* into *biting Lice*; raising his Militia of *Locusts* against them; causing a *Three days Darkness* without stopping the motion of the *Sun*: Taking off their *First-born*, the excellency of their strength, in a Night, by the stroke of the *Angels Sword*? He takes off the Chariot Wheels of *Pharaoh*, and presents him with a Destruction, where he expected a Victory: brings those Waves over the heads of him and his Host, which stood firm as Marble Walls for the safety of his People: The Sea is made to swallow them up, that durst not by the order of their Governour touch the *Israelites*. It only sprinkled the one as a type of Baptism, and drowned the other as an image of Hell. Thus he made it both a Deliverer and a Revenger, the Instrument of an offensive and defensive War. He brings Princes to nothing, and makes the Judges of the Earth as vanity. Great Monarchs have by his Power been hurl'd from their Thrones, and their Scepters (like *Venice-Glasses*) broken before their faces, and They been advanced, that have had the least hopes of Grandure. He hath pluckt up Cedars by the Roots, lopt off the Branches, and set a Shrub to grow up in the place; dissolv'd Rocks, and establish'd Bubbles. *Luke 1. 52. He hath shewed strength with his arm, he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts: he hath put down the mighty from their seat, and exalted them of low degree.*

*Isa. 40. 23, 24.*

And



And these things he doth magnifie his Power in.

1. *By ordering the nature of Creatures as he pleases.* By restraining their force, or guiding their motions. The restraint of the destructive qualities of the Creatures argues as great a Power, as the change of their Natures, yea and a greater. The qualities of Creatures may be chang'd by Art and Composition, as in the preparing of Medicines; but what but a Divine Power could restrain the operation of the Fire from the *Three Children*, while it retain'd its heat and burning quality in *Nebuchadnezzars Furnace*? The operation was curb'd while its nature was preserved. All Creatures are called his *Host*, because he Marshals and ranks them as an Army to serve his purposes. The whole Scheme of Nature is ready to favour Men when God orders it, and ready to punish Men when God commends it. He gave the *Red Sea* but a check, and it obeyed his Voice; *Exod. 14. 27.* *2. 106. 9.* He rebuked the *Red Sea* also, and it was dried up; the motion of it ceased, and the Waters of it were rang'd as defensive Walls, to secure the march of his People: And at the motion of the Hand of *Moses*, the Servant of the Lord, the Sea recovered its violence, and the Walls that were framed came tumbling down upon the *Egyptians* Heads\*. The Creator of Nature is not led by the necessity of Nature: He that settled the order of Nature, can change or restrain the order of Nature according to his Sovereign pleasure. The most necessary and useful Creatures he can use as Instruments of his Vengeance: *Water* is necessary to cleanse, and by that he can deface a World; *Fire* is necessary to warm, and by that he can burn a *Sodom*: From the *Water* he form'd the *Fowl*†, and by that he dissolves them in the Deluge; *Fire* or Heat is necessary to the Generation of Creatures, and by that he ruins the *Cities of the Plain*. He orders all as he pleases, to perform every tittle and punctilio of his purpose. The *Sea* observ'd him so exactly, that it drown'd not one *Israelite*, nor saved one *Egyptian*. *Psal. 106. 11.* There was not One of them left. And to perfect the *Israelites* Deliverance, he followed them with Testimonies of his Power above the strength of Nature. When they wanted Drink, he orders *Moses* to strike a Rock, and the Rock spouts a River, and a Channel is formed for it to attend them in their Journey. When they wanted Bread, he dress'd *Manna* for them in the Heavens, and sent it to their Tables in the *Desart*. When he would declare his Strength, he calls to the *Heavens* to pour down *Righteousness*, and to the *Earth* to bring forth *Salvation*, *Isai. 45. 8.* Though God had created Righteousness or Deliverance for the *Jews* in *Babylon*, yet he calls to the Heavens and the Earth to be assistant to the design of *Cyrus*, whom he had raised for that purpose, as he speaks in the beginning of the Chapter, *vers. 1, 2, 3, 4.* As God created Man for a supernatural end, and all Creatures for Man as their immediate end; so he makes them, according to opportunities, subservient to that supernatural end of Man, for which he created him. He that spans the Heavens with his fist, can shoot all Creatures like an Arrow, to hit what mark he pleases. He that spread the Heavens and the Earth by a Word, and can by a Word fold them up more easily than a Man can a garment||, can order the streams of Nature; Cannot he work without Nature as well as with it, beyond Nature, contrary to Nature, that can (as it were) flip Nature with his finger into that Nothing whence he drew it? Who can cast down the *Sun* from his Throne, clap the distinguish'd parts of the World together, and make them march in the same order to their Confusion, as they did in their Creation: Who can jumble the whole Frame together, and by a Word dissolve the Pillars of the World, and make the Fabrick lie in a ruinous heap.

2. *In effecting his Purposes by small Means:* In making use of the Meanest Creatures. As the Power of God is seen in the creation of the smallest Creatures, and assembling so many perfections in the little body of an Insect, as an *Ant*, or *Spider*: So his Power is not less magnified in the use he makes of them. As he magnifies his Wisdom, by using ignorant Instruments; so he exalts his Power, by employing weak Instruments in his service: The Meanness and Imperfection of the matter sets off the Excellency of the Workman; so the weakness of the Instrument is a foil to the Power of the principal Agent. When God hath effected things by Means in the Scripture, he hath usually brought about his Purposes by weak Instruments.

*Moses,*



Josh. 6. 20.

\* Joel 1. 6. 7.

*Moses*, a Fugitive from *Egypt*, and *Aaron* a Captive in it, are the Instruments of the *Israelites* Deliverance. By the motion of *Moses* his *Rod*, he works Wonders in the Court of *Pharaoh*, and summons up his Judgments against him. He brought down *Pharaoh's* Stomack for a while by a Squadron of *Lice* and *Locusts*, wherein Divine Power was more seen, than if *Moses* had brought him to his own Articles by a multitude of Warlike Troops. The fall of the Walls of *Jericho* by the sound of *Rams horns*, was a more glorious Character of Gods Power, than if *Joshuah* had batter'd it down with an hundred of Warlike Engines. Thus the great Army of the *Midianites*, which lay as *Grasshoppers* upon the ground, were routed by *Gideon* in the head of *Three hundred Men*; and *Goliath* a Giant, laid level with the ground by *David* a Stripling, by the force of a *Sling*: A *Thousand Philistines* dispatcht out of the World by the *Fire Bone of an Ass* in the hand of *Sampson*. He can master a stout Nation by an Army of *Locusts*, and render the Teeth of those little Insects as destructive as the Teeth, yea the strongest Teeth, the *Cheek Teeth* of a great *Lion*\*. The *Thunderbolt*, which produceth sometimes dreadful effects, is compacted of little Atoms which fly in the Air, small Vapors drawn up by the *Sun*, and mixt with other Sulphurous matter and petrifying Juice. Nothing is so weak, but his Strength can make victorious; nothing so small, but by his Power he can accomplish his great ends by it; nothing so vile, but his Might can conduct to his glory; and no Nation so mighty, but he can waste and enfeeble by the Meaneit Creatures. God is great in Power in the greatest things, and not little in the smallest; his Power in the minutest Creatures which he uses for his service, surmounts the force of our Understanding. \*

1 Cor. 1. 24.

III. *The Power of God appears in Redemption.* As our Saviour is called the *Wisdom of God*, so he is called the *Power of God*. The Arm of Power was lifted up as high, as the designs of Wisdom were laid deep: As this way of Redemption could not be contriv'd, but by an Infinite Wisdom; so it could not be accomplish'd, but by an Infinite Power. None but God could shape such a design, and none but God could effect it. The Divine Power in Temporal deliverances, and freedom from the slavery of humane Oppressors, vails to that which glitters in Redemption; whereby the *Devil* is defeated in his designs, stript of his spoils, and yok'd in his strength. The Power of God in Creation requires not those degrees of Admiration, as in Redemption. In Creation the World was erected from Nothing; as there was Nothing to act, so there was Nothing to oppose; no victorious *Devil* was in that to be subdued, no thundring *Law* to be silenced, no *Death* to be conquer'd, no *Transgression* to be pardoned and rooted out, no *Hell* to be shut, no Ignominious death upon the *Cross* to be suffered. It had been in the nature of the thing, an easier thing to Divine Power to have created a new World, than repair'd a broken, and purified a polluted one. This is the most admirable Work that ever God brought forth in the World, greater than all the Marks of his Power in the first Creation.

And this will appear,

1. *In the Person Redeeming.*

2. *In the publication and propagation of the Doctrine of Redemption.*

3. *In the application of Redemption.*

I. *In the Person Redeeming.*

First, *In his Conception.*

1. *He was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Womb of the Virgin.* Luke 1. 35. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee.* Which act is exprest to be the effect of the Infinite Power of God; and it exprestes the supernatural manner of the forming the Humanity of our Saviour, and signifies not the Divine Nature of Christ infusing it self into the Womb of the Virgin; for the Angel refers it to the manner of the operation of the Holy Ghost in the producing the Humane Nature of Christ, and not to the Nature assuming that Humanity into union with it self. The *Holy Ghost*, or the Third Person in the Trinity, overshadowed the Virgin, and by a Creative act fram'd the Humanity of Christ, and united it to the Divinity. It is therefore exprest by a word of the same import with that used Gen. 1. 2. *The Spirit moved upon the face of the*



the face of the Waters, which signifies (as it were) a Brooding upon the Chaos, shadowing it with his Wings, as Hens sit upon their Eggs, to form them and hatch them into Animals; or else it is an allusion to the Cloud which covered the Tent of the Congregation, when the Glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle\*. It was not such a Creative Act as we call Immediate, which is a production out of Nothing; but a Mediate Creation, such as Gods bringing things into form out of the first Matter, which had nothing but an Obediential or Passive disposition to whatsoever stamp the Powerful Wisdom of God should imprint upon it. So the substance of the Virgin had no active, but only a passive disposition to this work: The Matter of the Body was Earthly, the substance of the Virgin; the forming of it was Heavenly, the Holy Ghost working upon that Matter. And therefore when it is said, that she was found with Child of the Holy Ghost, 'tis to be understood of the Efficacy of the Holy Ghost, not of the Substance of the Holy Ghost. The matter was Natural, but the manner of Conceiving was in a Supernatural way, above the methods of Nature. In reference to the Active Principle the Redeemer is called in the Prophecy†, *The Branch of the Lord*, in regard of the Divine hand that planted him: In respect to the Passive Principle, *The Fruit of the Earth*, in regard of the Womb that bare him; and therefore said to be made of a Woman||. That part of the Flesh of the Virgin whereof the Humane Nature of Christ was made, was refin'd and purifi'd from Corruption by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, as a skillful Workman separates the Dross from the Gold: Our Saviour is therefore called, *that Holy thing*\*, though born of the Virgin: He was necessarily some way to descend from Adam. God indeed might have created his Body out of Nothing, or have formed it (as he did Adams) out of the Dust of the Ground: But had he been thus extraordinarily formed, and not propagated from Adam; though he had been a Man like one of us, yet he would not have been of kin to us, because it would not have been a Nature deriv'd from Adam, the Common Parent of us all. † It was therefore necessary to an affinity with us, not only that he should have the same Humane Nature, but that it should flow from the same Principle, and be propagated to him. But now, by this way of producing the Humanity of Christ of the Substance of the Virgin, He was in Adam (say some) Corporally, but not Seminally; of the Substance of Adam, or a Daughter of Adam, but not of the Seed of Adam: And so he is of the same Nature that had sinned, & so what he did and suffered may be imputed to us; which, had he been created as Adam, could not be claim'd in a Legal and Judicial way.

\*Exod. 40.34.

Mat. 1.18.

†Isai. 4.2.

||Gal. 4.4.

\*Luke 1.35.

†Amyraut. in Symbol. p.163, &amp;c.

2. It was not convenient he should be born in the Common order of Nature, of Father and Mother: For whosoever is so born is polluted: A Clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean||: And our Saviour had been incapable of being a Redeemer, had he been tainted with the least Spot of our Nature, but would have stood in need of Redemption himself. Besides, it had been inconsistent with the Holiness of the Divine Nature, to have assumed a tainted and defiled Body. He that was the Fountain of Blessedness to all Nations, was not to be subject to the Curse of the Law for himself; which he would have been, had he been conceiv'd in an ordinary way. He that was to overturn the Devils Empire, was not to be any way captive under the Devils Power, as a Creature under the Curse; nor could he be able to break the Serpents head, had he been tainted with the Serpents breath.

Again, supposing that Almighty God by his Divine Power had so order'd the matter, and so perfectly sanctified an Earthly Father and Mother from all Original Spot, that the Humane Nature might have been transmitted Immaculate to him, as well as the Holy Ghost did purge that part of the flesh of the Virgin of which the Body of Christ was made; yet it was not convenient that that Person, that was God blessed for ever as well as Man, partaking of our Nature, should have a Conception in the same manner as ours, but different, and in some measure conformable to the Infinite dignity of his Person; which could not have been, had not a supernatural Power and a Divine Person been concern'd as an active Principle in it. Besides, such a Birth had not been agreeable to the first Promise, which calls him *The Seed of the woman*, not of the Man; and so the Veracity of God had suffer'd some detriment: The seed of the woman only, is set in opposition to the seed of the Serpent.

3. By this manner of Conception, the Holiness of his Nature is secur'd, and his fitness for his Office is assur'd to us. 'Tis now a pure and unpolluted Humanity that is



the Temple and Tabernacle of the Divinity : The *Fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily*, and dwells in him Holily. His Humanity is supernaturaliz'd, and elevated by the activity of the *Holy Ghost*, hatching the Flesh of the *Virgin* into Man, as the *Chaos* into a World. Though we read of some *sanctified from the Womb*, it was not a pure and perfect Holiness; it was like the Light of Fire mixed with Smoak, an infus'd Holiness accompanied with a Natural taint : But the Holiness of the *Redeemer* by this Conception, is like the Light of the *Sun*, pure and without spot. The Spirit of *Holiness* supplying the place of a Father in a way of Creation.

His Fitness for his Office is also assur'd to us ; for being born of the *Virgin*, one of our Nature, but conceived by the *Spirit* a Divine Person, the guilt of our Sins may be imputed to him because of our Nature, without the stain of Sin inherent in him ; because of his Supernatural Conception he is capable, as one of Kin to us, to bear our *Curse* without being toucht by our Taint. By this means our sinful Nature is assum'd without Sin in that Nature which was assum'd by him : Flesh he hath, but not *Sinful flesh*, *Rom. 8. 3.* Real Flesh, but not really Sinful, only by way of Imputation.

Nothing but the Power of God is evident in this whole Work : By the ordinary Laws and course of Nature a Virgin could not bear a Son ; nothing but a Supernatural and Almighty Grace could intervene to make so holy and perfect a Conjunction. \* The generation of others, in an ordinary way, is by Male and Female : But the *Virgin* is *overshadow'd by the Spirit and Power of the Highest*. Man only is the product of Natural generation ; this which is born of the *Virgin* is the *Holy thing*, the *Son of God*. In other generations, a Rational Soul is only united to a Material Body : But in *this*, the Divine Nature is united with the Humane in one Person by an indissoluble Union.

II. The Second Act of Power in the Person Redeeming, is *the Union of the two Natures, the Divine and Humane*. The designing indeed of this was an act of Wisdom ; but the accomplishing it was an act of Power.

1. *There is in this Redeeming Person a Union of two Natures*. He is God and Man in one Person. *Heb. 1. 8, 9. Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever : God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness, &c.* The Son is called *God*, having a *Throne for ever and ever*, and the *Unction* speaks him *Man* : The Godhead cannot be Anointed, nor hath any Fellows. Humanity and Divinity are ascrib'd to him, *Rom. 1. 3, 4. He was of the Seed of David according to the Flesh, and declared to be the Son of God, by his Resurrection from the dead.* The Divinity and Humanity are both Prophetically joyn'd, *Zach. 12. 10. I will pour out my Spirit ;* the pouring forth the Spirit is an Act only of Divine Grace and Power. *And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced ;* the same Person pours forth the Spirit as God, and is pierced as Man. *The Word was made Flesh, John 1. 14.* Word from Eternity was made Flesh in time, Word and Flesh in one Person ; a great God, and a little Infant.

2. *The Terms of this Union were infinitely distant*. What greater distance can there be than between the Deity and Humanity, between the Creator and a Creature ? Can you imagine the distance between Eternity and Time, Infinite Power and Miserable Infirmary, an Immortal Spirit and Dying Flesh, the Highest Being and Nothing ? yet these are espous'd. A God of unmixt Blessedness is linkt personally with a Man of perpetual Sorrows : Life incapable to Die, joyn'd to a Body in that Oeconomy incapable to live without dying first ; Infinite Purity, and a reputed Sinner ; Eternal Blessedness with a *Cursed Nature*, Almighty and Weakness, Omniscience and Ignorance, Immutability and Changeableness, Incomprehensibleness and comprehensibility ; that which cannot be comprehended, and that which can be comprehended ; that which is intirely Independent, and that which is totally Dependant ; the Creator forming all things, and the Creature made met together to a Personal Union ; *the Word made flesh*†, the Eternal Son, the *Seed of Abraham*||. What more Miraculous, than for God to become Man, and Man to become God. That a Person possessed of all the Perfections of the Godhead, should inherit all the Imperfections of the Manhood in one Person,

\* Amviant  
to Limbs,  
p. 292.

† John. 1. 14.  
|| Heb. 2. 16.



Person, Sin only excepted: A Holiness uncapable of sinning to be made Sin; *God blessed for ever*, taking the properties of Humane Nature, and Humane Nature admitted to a *Union* with the Properties of the *Creator*: The *Fulness* of the Deity and the Emptiness of Man united together\*; not by a shining of the Deity upon the Humanity, as the light of the *Sun* upon the *Earth*, but by an inhabitation or indwelling of the Deity in the Humanity. Was there not need of an Infinite Power to bring together Terms so far asunder, to elevate the Humanity to be capable of and disposed for a conjunction with the Deity? If a clod of *Earth* should be advanced to, and united with the Body of the *Sun*, such an advance would evidence it self to be a work of Almighty Power: The Clod hath nothing in its own nature to render it so glorious, no power to climb up to so high a dignity: How little would such a Union be, to that we are speaking of? Nothing less than an incomprehensible Power could effect, what an Incomprehensible Wisdom did project in this affair.

3. Especially *since the Union is so strait*. 'Tis not such a *Union* as is between a Man and his House he dwells in, whence he goes out and to which he returns, without any alteration of himself or his House; nor such a *Union* as is between a Man and his Garment, which both communicate and receive warmth from one another; nor such as is between an Artificer and his Instrument wherewith he works; nor such a *Union* as one Friend hath with another: All these are distant things, not one in Nature, but have distinct subsistences. Two Friends, though united by love, are distinct Persons; a Man and his Cloaths, an Artificer and his Instruments, have distinct subsistences: But the Humanity of Christ hath no subsistence, but in the Person of Christ.

† The straitness of this *Union* is express, and may be somewhat conceiv'd, by the union of *Fire* with *Iron*; [Fire pierceth through all the parts of *Iron*, it unites it self with every particle, bestows a light, heat, purity upon all of it; you cannot distinguish the *Iron* from the *Fire*, or the *Fire* from the *Iron*, yet they are distinct Natures: So the *Deity* is united to the whole *Humanity*, seasons it, and bestows an excellency upon it, yet the Natures still remain distinct. And as during that union of *Fire* with *Iron*, the *Iron* is uncapable of rust or blackness; so is the *Humanity* uncapable of Sin: And as the operation of *Fire* is attributed to the red-hot *Iron*, (as the *Iron* may be said to heat, burn, and the *Fire* may be said to cut and pierce) yet the imperfections of the *Iron* do not affect the *Fire*; so in this Mytery, those things which belong to the *Divinity* are ascribed to the *Humanity*, and those things which belong to the *Humanity* are ascribed to the *Divinity*, in regard of the Person in whom those Natures are united; yet the Imperfections of the *Humanity* do not hurt the *Divinity*.] The *Divinity* of Christ is as really united with the *Humanity*, as the *Soul* with the *Body*: The Person was one, though the Natures were two, so united, that the Sufferings of the Humane Nature were the Sufferings of that Person, and the dignity of the Divine was imputed to the Humane, by reason of that Unity of both in one Person: Hence the Blood of the Humane Nature is said to be the *Blood of God*||. \* All things ascrib'd to the Son of God, may be ascrib'd to this Man; and the things ascrib'd to this Man, may be ascrib'd to the Son of God, as this Man is the Son of God Eternal, Almighty: And it may be said, *God suffered*, was *Crucified*, &c. for the Person of Christ is but *one*, most simple; the *Person* suffered, that was *God* and *Man* united, making *One Person*.

4. And though the Union be so strait, yet without confusion of the Natures, or change of them into one another. † The two Natures of Christ are not mixed, as Liquors that incorporate with one another when they are poured into a Vessel; the *Divine Nature* is not turned into the *Humane*, nor the *Humane* into the *Divine*, one Nature doth not swallow up another and make a *third Nature*, distinct from each of them. The Deity is not turned into the Humanity, as *Air* (which is next to a Spirit) may be thickned and turned into *Water*, and *Water* may be rarified into *Air* by the power of *Heat* boyling it. The *Deity* cannot be chang'd, because the Nature of it is to be unchangeable: It would not be Deity, if it were Mortal and capable of Suffering. The *Humanity* is not chang'd into the *Deity*, for then Christ could not have been a Sufferer: If the *Humanity* had been swallowed up into the *Deity*, it had lost its own distinct Nature and put on the Nature of the Deity, and consequently been uncapable of Suffering: *Finite* can never by any mixture be chang'd into *Infinite*, nor *Infinite* into *Finite*.

\* Colos. 2. 9.

† Lessius, de  
Pers. divin.  
lib. 12. cap. 4.  
p. 104.|| Acts 20. 28.  
\* Lessius,  
p. 103, 104.† Lessius, de  
antea, p. 103,  
104.  
Amvral.  
Irenic. p. 234.



\* Amyrald.  
Irenic. p. 282.

This Union in this regard may be resembled to the Union of *Light* and *Air*, which are strictly joyn'd; for the *Light* passes through all parts of the *Air*, but they are not confounded, but remain in their distinct essences as before the union, without the least confusion with one another. \* The Divine Nature remains as it was before the Union, intire in it self, only the Divine Person assumes another Nature to himself. The Humane Nature remains, as it would have done had it existed separately from the *Abyſs*, except that then it would have had a proper subsistence by it self, which now it borrows from its union with the *Abyſs*, or *Word*; but that doth not belong to the Constitution of its Nature.

Now let us *Consider*, what a wonder of Power is all this: The knitting a Noble Soul to a Body of Clay was not so great an exploit of Almightyness, as the espousing Infinite and Finite together. Man is further distant from God, than Man from Nothing. What a wonder is it, that *two* Natures infinitely distant, should be more intimately united than any thing in the World, and yet without any confusion? That the same Person should have both a Glory and a Grief; an infinite Joy in the Deity, and an unexpressible Sorrow in the Humanity? That a God upon a Throne should be an Infant in a Cradle; the Thundering Creator be a weeping Babe and a suffering Man, are such expressions of mighty Power, as well as condescending Love, that they astonish Men upon Earth, and Angels in Heaven.

3. *Power was evident in the progress of his life.* In the Miracles he wrought; How often did he expel malicious and powerful Devils from their habitations; hurl them from their Thrones, and make them fall from Heaven like *Lightning*? How many Wonders were wrought by his bare Word, or a single Touch? Sight restored to the Blind, and *Hearing* to the Deaf; *Palsie* Members restored to the exercise of their functions; a dismiss given to many deplorable Maladies, impure *Leprosies* chas'd from the Persons they had infected, and *Bodies* beginning to putrifie rais'd from the Grave. But the mightiest Argument of Power was his *Patience*. That he who was in his Divine Nature elevated above the World, should so long continue upon a Dung-hill, endure the contradiction of *Sinners* against himself; be patiently subject to the Reproaches and Indignities of Men, without displaying that Justice which was essential to the Deity, and in especial manner daily merited by their provoking Crimes. The Patience of Man under great Affronts, is a greater Argument of power, than the Brawnyness of his Arm: A Strength employ'd in the revenge of every Injury, signifies a greater infirmity in the Soul, than there can be ability in the Body.

4. *Divine Power was apparent in his Resurrection.* The unlocking the belly of the *Whale* for the deliverance of *Jonas*; the rescue of *Daniel* from the Den of *Lions*; and the restraining the *Fire* from burning the *Three Children*, were signal declarations of his Power, and types of the Resurrection of our Saviour. But what are those to that which was represented by them? That was a power over Natural causes, a curbing of Beasts, and restraining of Elements; But in the Resurrection of Christ, God exercis'd a power over himself, and quencht the flames of his own *Wrath*, hotter than Millions of *Nebuchadnezzars* Furnaces; unlockt the Prison doors, wherein the *Curses* of the Law had lodg'd our Saviour, stronger than the Belly and Ribbs of a *Leviathan*. In the rescue of *Daniel* and *Jonas*, God overpowered Beasts; and in this tore up the strength of the Old Serpent, and pluckt the Scepter from the hand of the Enemy of Mankind. The Work of *Resurrection* indeed, considered in it self, requires the efficacy of an Almighty Power: Neither Man nor Angel can create new dispositions in a Dead Body, to render it capable of lodging a Spiritual Soul; nor can they restore a dislodged Soul, by their own power, to such a Body. The restoring a Dead Body to life requires an Infinite Power, as well as the Creation of the World: But there was in the Resurrection of Christ something more difficult than this; while he lay in the Grave he was under the *Curse* of the Law, under the execution of that dreadful Sentence, *Thou shalt die the death*. His *Resurrection* was not only the re-tying the Marriage knot between his Soul and Body, or the rousing the *Stone* from the Grave; but a taking off an infinite weight, the *Sin* of Mankind, which lay upon him: So vast a weight could not be removed without the strength of



of an Almighty Arm. 'Tis therefore ascrib'd, not to an ordinary operation, but an operation with *Power*, and such a Power wherein the Glory of the Father <sup>† Rom. 1. 4.</sup> did appear. *Rom. 6. 4. Rais'd up from the dead by the glory of the Father*, that is, the glorious Power of God. As the Eternal Generation is stupendous, so is his Resurrection, which is called, a *new begetting* of him, *Acts 13. 33.* 'Tis a wonder of Power, that the Divine and Humane Nature should be joyn'd; and no less wonder, that his Person should surmount and rise up from the Curse of God, under which he lay. The *Apostle* therefore adds one expression to another, and heaps up a variety, signifying thereby that one was not enough to represent it, *Eph. 1. 19. Exceeding greatness of power, and working of mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.* It was an hyperbole of Power, the excellency of the Mightiness of his Strength; the loftiness of the expressions seems to come short of the apprehension he had of it in his Soul.

Secondly, This Power appears in the Publication and Propagation of the *Doctrine of Redemption.*

The Divine Power will appear, if you consider,

1. The Nature of the Doctrine.
2. The Instruments employed in it.
3. The Means they us'd to propagate it.
4. The Success they had.

I. The Nature of the Doctrine.

1. It was contrary to the common received reason of the World. The *Philosophers*, the Masters of Knowledge among the *Gentiles*, had Maxims of a different stamp from it. Though they agreed in the Being of a God, yet their Notions of his Nature were confus'd and embroil'd with many Errors; the Unity of God was not commonly assented unto: They had multiplied Deities according to the Fancies they had received from some of a more elevated Wit and refin'd Brain, than others. Though they had some notion of Mediators, yet they placed in those Seats, their publick Benefactors; Men that had been useful to the World, or their particular Countries, in imparting to them some profitable Invention. To discard those, was to charge themselves with Ingratitude to them, from whom they had received signal benefits, and to whose Mediation, Conduct, or Protection, they ascrib'd all the Success they had been blessed with in their several Provinces; and to charge themselves with Folly, for rendring an Honour and Worship to them so long. Could the Doctrine of a Crucified Mediator, whom they had never seen, that had conquer'd no Country for them, never enlarg'd their Territories, brought to light no new profitable Invention for the increase of their Earthly welfare, as the rest had done, be thought sufficient to balance so many of their reputed *Heroes*? How ignorant were they in the foundations of the True Religion? The belief of a Providence was staggering; nor had they a true prospect of the nature of Vertue and Vice: Yet they had a fond Opinion of the strength of their own Reason, and the Maxims that had been handed down to them by their Predecessors, which *Paul*\* entitles, a *Science* <sup>\* 1 Tim. 5. 20.</sup> *falsely so called*, either meant of the *Philosophers* or the *Gnosticks*. They presum'd that they were able to measure all things by their own Reason; whence, when the *Apostle* came to preach the Doctrine of the Gospel at *Athens*, the great School of Reason in that Age, they gave him no better a Title than that of a *Babler*, *Acts 17. 18.* and openly mocked him, verse 32. a *Seed gatherer*||, one that <sup>|| Σπέρμω λήψ.</sup> hath no more brain or sense, than a Fellow that gathers up Seeds that are spilt in a Market, or one that hath a vain and empty sound without Sense or Reason, like a foolish Mountebank; so slightly did those Rationalists of the World think of the Wisdom of Heaven. That the Son of God should vail himself in a Mortal Body, and suffer a disgraceful Death in it, were things above the ken of Reason.

Besides, the World had a general disesteem of the Religion of the *Jews*, and were prejudic'd against any thing that came from them. Whence the *Romans*, that used to incorporate the gods of other Conquer'd Nations in their *Capitol*, never moved to have the God of *Israel* worshipp'd among them. Again, they might



might argue against it with much fleshly Reason: Here is a *Crucified God* preached by a Company of Mean and Ignorant persons; What Reason can we have to entertain this Doctrine, since the *Jews*, who (as they tell us) had the *Prophecies* of him, did not acknowledge him? Surely, had there been such Predictions, they would not have Crucified, but Crowned their King, and expected from him the Conquest of the Earth under their Power? What reason have we to entertain him, whom his own Nation (among whom he lived, with whom he conversed) so unanimously, by the Vote of the Rulers as well as the Rout, rejected? It was impossible to conquer Minds possessed with so many Errors, and applauding themselves in their own Reason, and to render them capable of receiving Revealed Truths without the influence of a Divine Power.

2. *It was contrary to the Customs of the World.* The strength of Custom in most Men surmounts the strength of Reason, and Men commonly are so wedded to it, that they will be sooner divorc'd from any thing, than the Modes and Patterns received from their Ancestors. The endeavouring to change Customs of an ancient standing, hath begotten Tumults and furious Mutinies among Nations, though the change would have been much for their advantage.

This *Doctrine* struck at the Root of the Religion of the World, and the Ceremonies wherein they had been educated from their Infancy, delivered to them from their Ancestors, confirm'd by the customary Observance of many Ages, rooted in their Minds and establish'd by their Laws. *Acts 18. 13.* *This Fellow perswadeth us to worship God contrary to the Law*, against Customs, to which they ascrib'd the happiness of their States, and the prosperity of their People; and would put in the place of this Religion they would abolish, a new one instituted by a Man whom the *Jews* had condemn'd, and put to death upon a Cross, as an Impostor, Blasphemer, and Seditious person.

It was a *Doctrine* that would change the Customs of the *Jews*, who were intrusted with the *Oracles of God*. It would bury for ever their Ceremonial Rites, delivered to them by *Moses* from that God, who had with a mighty hand brought them out of *Egypt*, consecrated their Law with *Thunders* and *Lightnings* from Mount *Sinai*, at the time of its publication, backt it with severe Sanctions, confirm'd it by many Miracles, both in the *Wilderness* and their *Canaan*, and had continued it for so many *Hundred years*. They could not but remember how they had been ravaged by other Nations, and Judgments sent upon them when they neglected and slighted it; and with what great success they were follow'd when they valued and observed it; and how they had abhorred the Author of this new Religion, who had spoken slightly of their Traditions, till they put him to death with *Infamy*. Was it an easie matter to divorce them from that Worship, upon which were entail'd (as they imagin'd) their *Peace*, *Plenty*, and *Glory*, things of the dearest regard with Mankind? The *Jews* were no less devoted to their *Ceremonial Traditions*, than the *Heathen* were to their *Vain Superstitions*.

This *Doctrine* of the *Gospel* was of that nature, that the state of Religion all over the Earth must be overturned by it; the Wisdom of the *Greeks* must vail to it, the Idolatry of the People must stoop to it, and the prophane Customs of Men must moulder under the weight of it. Was it an easie matter for the Pride of Nature to deny a customary Wisdom, to entertain a new Doctrine against the Authority of their Ancestors; to inscribe *Folly* upon that which hath made them admir'd by the rest of the World? Nothing can be of greater esteem with Men, than the Credit of their *Law-givers* and *Founders*, the Religion of their Fathers, and Prosperity of themselves; hence the Minds of Men were sharpened against it. The *Greeks*, the Wisest Nation, slighted it as Foolish; the *Jews*, the Religious Nation, stumbled at it, as contrary to the received Interpretations of Ancient Prophecies and Carnal Conceits of an *Earthly glory*. The dimmest Eye may behold the difficulty to change Custom, a Second Nature: 'Tis as hard as to change a *Wolf* into a *Lamb*, to level a *Mountain*, stop the course of the *Sun*, or change the Inhabitants of *Africk* into the colour of *Europe*. Custom dips Men in as durable a Dye, as Nature. The difficulties of carrying it on against the Divine Religion of the *Jew*, and rooted Customs of the *Gentiles*, were unconquerable by



by any but an Almighty Power. And in this the Power of God hath appeared wonderfully.

3. *It was contrary to the Sensuality of the World, and the Lusts of the Flesh.* How much the *Gentiles* were over-grown with base and unworthy Lusts at the time of the Publication of the Gospel, needs no other Memento than the *Apostles* Discourse, *Rom. 1.* As there was no Error but prevail'd upon their Minds, so there was no brutish Affection but was wedded to their Hearts. The *Doctrine* propos'd to them was not easie; it flatter'd not the Sense, but checked the Stream of Nature. It thundred down those three great Engines whereby the Devil had subdued the World to himself, *the lust of the Flesh, the lust of the Eye, and the pride of Life.* Not only the most sordid Affections of the Flesh, but the more refin'd Gratifications of the Mind: It stript Nature both of *Devil* and *Man*; of what was commonly esteem'd great and vertuous. That which was the root of their Fame, and the satisfaction of their Ambition, was struck at by this Ax of the Gospel. The first Article of it order'd them to deny themselves, not to presume upon their own worth; to lay their Understandings and Wills at the foot of the Cross, and resign them up to one newly crucified at *Jerusalem*: Honours and Wealth were to be despis'd, Flesh to be tam'd, the Cross to be borne, Enemies to be loved, Revenge to be satisfied, Blood to be spilt, and Torments to be endured for the Honour of One they never saw, nor ever before heard of, who was preached with the Circumstances of a shameful Death, enough to affright them from the Entertainment: And the Report of a Resurrection and glorious Ascension were things never heard of by them before, and unknown in the World, that would not easily enter into the belief of men: The Cross, Disgrace, Self-denial, were only discours'd of in order to the attainment of an invisible World, and an unseen reward, which none of their Predecessors ever returned to acquaint them with; a Patient death, contrary to the pride of Nature, was publisht as the way to Happiness and a blessed Immortality: The dearest Lusts were to be pierced to death for the honour of this new Lord. Other Religions brought Wealth and Honour; this, struck them off from such Expectations, and presented them with no Promise of any thing in this Life, but a prospect of Misery: Except those inward Consolations to which before they had been utter Strangers, and had never experimented. It made them to depend not upon themselves, but upon the sole Grace of God. It decried all natural, all moral Idolatry, things as dear to men as the Apple of their Eyes. It despoil'd them of whatsoever the Mind, Will, and Affections of men, naturally lay claim to, and glory in. It pulled Self up by the Roots, unman'd carnal Man, and debas'd the Principle of Honour and Self-satisfaction, which the World counted at that time noble and brave. In a word, it took them off from themselves, to act like Creatures of God's framing; to know no more than he would admit them, and do no more than he did command them. How difficult must it needs be to reduce men, that plac'd all their happiness in the Pleasures of this Life, from their pompous Idolatry and brutish Affections, to this mortifying Religion? What might the World say? Here is a Doctrine will render us a company of puling Animals: Farewel Generosity, Bravery, Sense of Honour, Courage in enlarging the Bounds of our Country, for an ardent Charity to the bitterest of our Enemies. Here's a Religion will rust our Swords, Canker our Arms, dispirit what we have hitherto call'd Vertue, and annihilate what hath been esteem'd worthy and comely among Mankind. Must we change Conquest for Suffering, the increase of our Reputation for Self-denial, the natural Sentiment of Self-preservation for affecting a dreadful Death? How impossible was it that a Crucified Lord, and a Crucifying Doctrine, should be received in the World without the mighty Operation of a Divine Power upon the Hearts of Men? And in this also the Almighty Power of God did notably shine forth.

II. Divine Power appear'd in the Instruments employ'd for the publishing and propagating the Gospel. Who were

1. *Mean and worthless in themselves.* Not noble and dignified with an earthly Grandeur, but of a low Condition, meanly bred: So far from any splendid Estates, that they possess'd nothing but their Nets; without any Credit and Reputation



tion in the World; without Comeliness and Strength; as unfit to subdue the World by Preaching, as an Army of Hares were to conquer it by War. Not learned Doctors, bred up at the feet of the Famous *Rabbins* at *Jerusalem*, whom *Paul* calls *the Princes of the World*\*; nor nurs'd up in the School of *Athens*, under the *Philosophers* and Orators of the time: Not the Wise-men of *Greece*, but the Fishermen of *Galilee*; naturally skill'd in no Language but their own, and no more exact in that than those of the same Condition in any other Nation: Ignorant of every thing but the Language of their Lakes and their fishing Trade; except *Paul*, call'd sometime after the rest to that Employment: And after the descent of the Spirit, they were ignorant and unlearned in every thing but the Doctrine they were commanded to publish; for the Council before whom they were summon'd, prov'd them to be so, which increased their wonder at them, *Acts* 4.13. Had it been publish'd by a Voice from Heaven, That *Twelve poor men*, taken out of Boats and Creeks, without any help of Learning, should conquer the World to the Cross, it might have been thought an Illusion against all the Reason of Men; yet we know it was undertaken and accomplish'd by them. They publish'd this Doctrine in *Jerusalem*, and quickly spread it over the greatest part of the World. Folly outwitted Wisdom, and Weakness over-powred Strength. The Conquest of the East by *Alexander* was not so admirable as the Enterprize of these poor men. He attempted his Conquest with the hands of a Warlike Nation, though indeed but a small number of Thirty thousand against Multitudes, many Hundred thousands of the Enemies; yet an Effeminate Enemy; a People inur'd to Slaughter and Victory attack'd great Numbers, but enfeebled by Luxury and Voluptuousness. Besides, he was bred up to such Enterprizes, had a learned Education under the best Philosopher, and a Military Education under the best Commander, and a natural Courage to animate him. These Instruments had no such advantage from Nature; the Heavenly Treasure was placed in those Earthen Vessels; as *Golden Lamps* in empty Pitchers, *Judges* 7.16. that the excellency or Hyperbole of the Power might be of God, *2 Cor.* 4.7. and the strength of his Arm be display'd in the infirmity of the Instruments. They were destitute of earthly Wisdom, and therefore despis'd by the Jews, and derided by the Gentiles; the Publishers were accounted Mad men, and the embracers Fools. Had they been Men of known natural Endowments, the Power of God had been ivail'd under the Gifts of the Creature.

2. Therefore a Divine Power suddenly spirited them, and fitted them for so great a Work. Instead of Ignorance they had the knowledge of the Tongues; and they that were scarce well skill'd in their own Dialect, were instructed on the sudden to speak the most flourishing Languages of the World, and Discourse to the People of several Nations, the great things of God†. Though they were not enriched with any Worldly wealth and possessed nothing, yet they were so sustained that they wanted nothing in any place where they came, a Table was spread for them in the midst of their bitterest Enemies. Their Fearfulness was chang'd into Courage, and they that a few days before skulk'd in Corners for fear of the Jews‡, speak boldly in the Name of that Jesus, whom they had seen put to death by the Power of the Rulers and the Fury of the People: They reproach them with the Murder of their Master, and out-brave that great People in the midst of their Temple, with the glory of that Person they had so lately Crucified\*. *Peter*, that was not long before quail'd at the presence of a Maid, was not daunted at the Presence of the Council, that had their hands yet reeking with the Blood of his Master; but being filled with the Holy Ghost, seems to dare the Power of the Priests and Jewish Governours, and is as confident in the Council Chamber, as he had been cowardly in the High Priests Hall†, the efficacy of Grace triumphing over the Fearfulness of Nature. Whence should this Ardor and Zeal, to propagate a Doctrine that had already born the Scars of the Peoples Fury be, but from a mighty Power, which changed those Hares into Lions, and stript them of their Natural Cowardize, so cloath them with a Divine Courage; making them in a moment both Wise and Magnanimous, alienating them from any Consultations with Flesh and Blood? As soon as ever the Holy Ghost came upon them as a mighty rushing Wind, they move up and down for the Interest of God; as Fish, after a great Clap of Thunder, are row'd, and move more nimbly

\* 1 Cor. 2. 8.

† Acts 2. 11.

‡ John 20. 19.

\* Acts 2. 23.  
Acts 3. 13.

† Acts 4. 9, &amp;c.



on the top of the Water; therefore that which did so fit them for this undertaking is called by the title of *Power from on high*, Luke 24.49.

### III. The Divine Power appears in the Means whereby it was propagated.

1. *By Means different from the Methods of the World.* Not by force of Arms, as some Religions have taken root in the World. *Mahomets* Horse hath trampled upon the Heads of Men, to imprint an *Alcoran* in their Brains, and robb'd Men of their Goods to plant their Religion. But the *Apostles* bore not this Doctrine through the World upon the Points of their Swords; they presented a *Bodily death* where they would bestow an *Immortal life*: They employ'd not Troops of Men in a Warlike posture, which had been possible for them after the Gospel was once spread; they had no Ambition to subdue Men unto themselves, but to God; they coveted not the Possessions of others; design'd not to enrich themselves; invaded not the Rights of Princes, nor the Liberties and Properties of the People: They ris'd them not of their Estates, nor scar'd them into this Religion by a fear of losing their Worldly happiness. The Arguments they used would naturally drive them from an entertainment of this Doctrine, rather than allure them to be Profelytes to it: Their design was to change their Hearts, not their Government; to wean them from the love of the *World*, to a love of a *Redeemer*; to remove that which would ruine their Souls. It was not to enslave them, but ransom them; they had a *warfare*, but not with *Carnal weapons*, but such as were *mighty through God for the pulling down of strong holds*, 2 Cor. 10.4. they used no weapons but the Doctrine they preach'd. Others that have not gained Conquests by the Edge of the Sword and the Stratagems of War, have extended their Opinions to others by the strength of Humane Reason, and the Insinuations of Eloquence. But the *Apostles* had as little flourish in their Tongues, as edge upon their Swords: Their Preaching was *not with the enticing words of Mans wisdom*\*; their Presence was mean, and their Discourses without varnish; \* 1 Cor. 2.4. their Doctrine was plain, a *Crucified Christ*; a Doctrine unlac'd, ungarnisht, un-toothsom to the World; but they had the *demonstration of the Spirit*, and a *mighty Power* for their Companion in the work. The Doctrine they preached, viz. the *Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ*, are called the *Powers*, not of this World, but of the *World to come*†. No less than a Supernatural Power † Heb. 6.5. could conduct them in this Attempt, with such weak Methods in Humane appearance.

2. *Against all the Force, Power, and Wit of the World.* The Divisions in the *Eastern Empire*, and the feeble and consuming State of the *Western*, contributed to *Mahomets* Success ||. But never was *Rome* in a more flourishing condition: *Learning, Eloquence, Wisdom, Strength* were at the highest pitch: Never was there a more diligent Watch against any *Innovations*; never was that State governed by more severe and suspicious Princes, than at the time when *Tiberius* and *Nero* held the Reins. No time seem'd to be more unfit for the entrance of a *New Doctrine* than that Age, wherein it begun to be first publish'd; never did any Religion meet with that Opposition from Men. *Idolatry* hath been often settled without any Contest; but this hath suffered the same Fate with the Instructor of it, and endured the *Contradictions of Sinners* against it self: And those that publish'd it, were not only without any Worldly prop, but expos'd themselves to the Hatred and Fury, to the Racks and Tortures of the strongest Powers on Earth. It never set foot in any place, but the Country was in an uproar ‡; Swords ‡ Acts 17.9. were drawn to destroy it; Laws made to suppress it; Prisons provided for the Professors of it; Fires kindled to consume them, and Executioners had a perpetual employment to stifle the progress of it.

*Rome* in its Conquest of Countries chang'd not the Religion, Rites, and Modes of their Worship: They alter'd their Civil Government, but left them to the liberty of their Religion, and many times joyned with them in the Worship of their Peculiar gods; and sometime imitated them at *Rome*, instead of abolishing them in the Cities they had subdued. But all their Councils were assembled, and their Force was bandied against the Lord and against his Christ; and that City that kindly receiv'd all manner of *Superstitions*, hated this Doctrine with an irreconcilable hatred.



It met with *Reproaches* from the Wise, and *Fury* from the Potentates; it was derided by the *one* as the greatest Folly, and persecuted by the *other* as contrary to God and Mankind; the *one* were afraid to lose their Esteems by the Doctrine, and the *other* to lose their Authority by a *Sedition* they thought a change of Religion would introduce. The *Romans*, that had been Conquerors of the Earth, feared Intestine Commotions, and the falling asunder the Links of their Empire: Scarce any of their first Emperors, but had their *Swords* dy'd Red in the Blood of the *Christians*. The *Flesh* with all its Lusts, the *World* with all its Flatteries, the *Statesmen* with all their Craft, and the *Mighty* with all their Strength joyn'd together to extirpate it: Though many Members were taken off by the Fires, yet the *Church* not only lived, but flourish'd in the Furnace. Converts were made by the Death of *Martyrs*, and the Flames which consumed their Bodies, were the occasion of firing Mens hearts with a Zeal for the Profession of it. Instead of being extinguish'd, the Doctrine shone more bright, and multiplied under the Sickles that were employed to cut it down: God ordered every Circumstance so, both in the Persons that publish'd it, the Means whereby, and the Time when, that nothing but his Power might appear in it, without any thing to dim and darken it.

IV. The Divine Power was conspicuous *in the great success it had under all these difficulties*. Multitudes were Prophecied of to embrace it; whence the Prophet *Isaiah*, after the Prophecy of the Death of Christ, *Isai. 53.* calls upon the Church to enlarge her Tents, and *lengthen out her Cords* to receive those Multitudes of Children that should call her Mother. *Isai. 54. 2, 3.* for she should *break forth on the right hand and on the left, and her seed should inherit the Gentiles*: The Idolaters and Persecutors should list their Names in the Muster-Roll of the Church.

Presently after the Descent of the Holy Ghost from Heaven upon the *Apostles*, you find the hearts of *Three thousand melted* by a plain declaration of this Doctrine; who were a little before so far from having a Favourable thought of it, that some of them at least, if not all, had express'd their Rage against it, in Voting for the Condemning and Crucifying the *Author of it*†: But in a moment they were so altered, that they breath out Affections instead of Fury; neither the respect they had to their Rulers, nor the honour they bore to their Priests; not the derisions of the People, nor the threatening of Punishment, could stop them from owning it in the face of multitudes of Discouragements. How wonderful is it that they should so soon, and by such small Means pay a reverence to the Servants, who had none for the Master? that they should hear them with patience, without the same Clamor against them as against Christ, *Crucifie them, Crucifie them?* But, that their hearts should so suddenly be enflam'd with Devotion to him dead, whom they so much abhorred when living. It had gained footing not in a Corner of the World, but in the most famous Cities; in *Jerusalem*, where Christ had been Crucified; in *Antioch*, where the Name of *Christians* first began; in *Corinth*, a place of Ingenious Arts; and *Ephesus*, the Seat of a noted Idol. In less than *Twenty years* there was never a Province of the *Roman Empire*, and scarce any part of the known World but was stor'd with the Professors of it. *Rome*, that was the *Metropolis* of the Idolatrous World, had multitudes of them sprinkled in every Corner, whose Faith was spoken of throughout the World\*. The Court of *Nero*, that Monster of Mankind, and the cruellest and sordid'st Tyrant that ever breathed, was not empty of sincere Votaries to it; there were *Saints in Caesars house*, while *Paul* was under *Nero's Chain*||: And it maintain'd its standing, and flourish'd in spite of all the force of Hell 250 years before any Sovereign Prince espoused it.

The Potentates of the Earth had conquer'd the Lands of Men, and subdued their Bodies; these vanquish'd Hearts and Wills, and brought the most beloved Thoughts under the Yoke of *Christ*: So much did this Doctrine overmaster the Consciences of its Followers, that they rejoiced more at their Yoke, than others at their Liberty; and counted it more a glory to die for the honour of it, than to live in the profession of it. Thus did our Saviour Reign and gather Subjects in the midst of his Enemies; in which respect, in the first discovery of the Gospel, he is describ'd as a *Mighty Conqueror*, Revel. 6. 2. and still conquering in the greatness of his strength.

How

† Acts 2. 41, 42.

\* Rom. 1. 8.

|| Phil. 4.



How great a Testimony of his Power is it, that from so small a Cloud should rise so glorious a *Sun*, that should chase before it the Darkness and Power of Hell; Triumph over the Idolatry, Superstition and Prophaness of the World? This plain Doctrine vanquish'd the Obstinacy of the *Jews*, baffled the Understanding of the *Greeks*, humbled the Pride of the *Grandees*, threw the *Devil* not only out of Bodies, but Hearts; tore up the foundation of his Empire, and planted the *Cross* where the Devil had for many Ages before established his *Standard*. How much more than a humane Force is illustrious in this whole Conduct? Nothing in any Age of the World can parallel it; it being so much against the Methods of Nature, the Disposition of the World, and (considering the Resistance against it) seems to surmount even the Work of *Creation*. Never were there in any Profession such multitudes, not of *Bedlams*, but Men of *Sobriety*, *Acuteness*, and *Wisdom*, that expos'd themselves to the fury of the Flames, and challenged Death in the most terrifying shapes for the Honour of this Doctrine.

To conclude, This should be often meditated upon to form our Understandings to a full assent to the *Gospel*, and the Truth of it; the want of which Consideration of *Power*, and the Customariness of an Education in the outward Profession of it, is the ground of all the *Prophaneness* under it and *Apostacy* from it; the distaste of the *Truth* it declares and the neglect of the *Duties* it enjoins. The more we have a prospect and sense of the Impressions of *Divine Power* in it, the more we shall have a Reverence of the *Divine Precepts*.

III. The Third thing is, The Power of God appears in the application of *Redemption*, as well as in the Person Redeeming, and the publication and propagation of the Doctrine of Redemption.

1. In the planting Grace.
2. In the Pardon of Sin.
3. In the preserving Grace.

1. In the planting Grace. There is no Expression which the Spirit of God hath thought fit in Scripture to resemble this Work to, but argues the exerting of a *Divine Power* for the effecting of it. When it is express'd by *Light*, it is as much as the Power of God in creating the *Sun*; when by *Regeneration*, 'tis as much as the Power of God in forming an *Infant*, and fashioning all the Parts of a Man; when it is called *Resurrection*, 'tis as much as the rearing of the Body again out of putrified Matter; when it is called *Creation*, 'tis as much as erecting a comely *World* out of meer Nothing, or an inform and uncomely Mass. As we could not contrive the *Death of Christ* for our Redemption, so we cannot form our *Souls* to the Acceptation of it; the Infinite efficacy of *Grace* is as necessary for the one, as the Infinite *Wisdom of God* was for laying the Platform of the other.

'Tis by his Power we have whatsoever pertains to *Godliness* as well as *Life* \* : \* 2 Pet. 1.3. He puts his Fingers upon the handle of the Lock, and turns the Heart to what Point he pleases; the Action whereby he performs this is express'd by a word of Force †. He hath snatch'd us from the power of *Darkness*; the Action whereby it is perform'd manifests it. In reference to this Power it is called *Creation*, which is a production from Nothing; and *Conversion* is a production from something more incapable of that state, than meer Nothing is of Being. There is a greater distance between the Terms of *Sin* and *Righteousness*, *Corruption* and *Grace*, than between the Terms of *Nothing* and *Being*; The greater the distance is, the more Power is requir'd to the producing any thing. As in *Miracles*, the Miracle is the greater where the Change is the greater; and the Change is the greater where the Distance is the greater: As it was a more signal mark of Power to change a *Dead Man to life*, than to change a *Sick Man to health*; so that the change here being from a Term of a greater distance, is more Powerful than the Creation of *Heaven and Earth*: Therefore whereas Creation is said to be wrought by his *Hands*, and the Heavens by his *Fingers*, or his *Word*; Conversion is said to be wrought by his *Arm*: In Creation we had an *Earthly*; by Conversion, a *Heavenly* state: In Creation, *Nothing* is changed into *Something*; in Conversion, *Hell* is transform'd into *Heaven*, which is more than the turning *Nothing* into a glorious *Angel*.



In that Thanksgiving of our Saviour for the *revelation* of the knowledge of himself to *Babes*, the simple of the World, he gives the Title to his Father, of *Lord of Heaven and Earth*†, intimating it to be an act of his Creative and Preserving Power; that Power whereby he formed *Heaven and Earth*, hath preserved the standing, and governed the motions of all Creatures from the beginning of the World.

† Mat. 11. 5.  
\* Eph. 1. 19.  
+ 2 Cor. 4. 7.  
|| 2 Pet. 1. 3.  
'Tis resembled to the most Magnificent Act of Divine Power that God ever put forth, *viz.* that in the *Resurrection of our Saviour*\*, wherein there was more than an ordinary impression of Might. 'Tis not so small a Power as that whereby we speak with *Tongues*, or whereby Christ opened the Mouths of the *Dumb* and the Ears of the *Deaf*, or unloosed the Cords of *Death* from a Person. 'Tis not that Power whereby our Saviour wrought those stupendous Miracles when he was in the World; but that Power which wrought a Miracle that amaz'd the most knowing Angels, as well as ignorant Man. The taking off the weight of the *Sin of the World* from our Saviour, and advancing him in his Humane Nature to rule over the *Angelical Host*, making him Head of *Principalities and Powers*; as much as to say, as great as all that Power which is display'd in our *Redemption*, from the first foundation to the last line in the superstructure. 'Tis therefore often set forth with an Emphasis, as *Excellency of power*†, and *Glorious power*||. To glory and virtue, we Translate it; but it is *διὰ δόξης*, *Through glory and virtue*, that is, by a glorious virtue or strength.

2. The Instrument whereby it is wrought is dignified with the title of Power. The Gospel which God useth in this great affair is called, *The Power of God to salvation*, Rom. 1. 16. and the *Rod of his strength*, Psal. 110. 2. And the day of the Gospel's appearance in the heart is emphatically called, *The day of Power*, verse 3. wherein he brings down strong holds and trowing Imaginations. \* And therefore the Angel *Gabriel*, which Name signifies the *Power of God*, was always sent upon those Messages which concerned the Gospel, as to *Daniel*, *Zachary*, *Mary*. The Gospel is the Power of God in way a of Instrumentality, but the Almightyness of God is the Principal in a way of Efficiency. The Gospel is the Scepter of Christ; but the Power of Christ is the Mover of that Scepter. The Gospel is not as a bare Word spoken, and proposing the thing; but as back'd with a higher efficacy of Grace: As the *Sword* doth instrumentally cut, but the Arm that wields it gives the blow, and makes it successful in the stroak. But this Gospel is the *Power of God*, because he edgeth this by his own Power, to surmount all resistance, and vanquish the greatest Malice of that Man he designs to work upon.

\* Grotius in  
Luke 1. 19.

The Power of God is conspicuous,

1. In turning the Heart of Man against the strength of the Inclinations of Nature. In the forming of Man of the Dust of the Ground, as the Matter contributed nothing to the Action whereby God formed it, so it had no Principle of resistance contrary to the design of God: But in Converting the Heart, there is not only wanting a principle of Assistance from him in this work, but the whole strength of Corrupt Nature is alarm'd to combat against the Power of his Grace. When the Gospel is presented, the Understanding is not only ignorant of it, but the Will perverse against it; the one doth not relish, and the other doth not esteem the Excellency of the Object. The Carnal wisdom in the Mind contrives against it, and the Rebellious Will puts the orders in execution against the Counsel of God, which requires the invincible Power of God to enlighten the *dark Mind*, to know what it flights; and the *fierce Will*, to embrace what it loaths. The stream of Nature cannot be turned, but by a Power above Nature: 'Tis not all the Created Power in Heaven and Earth can change a *Swine* into a *Man*, or a venomous *Toad* into a holy and illustrious *Angel*. Yet this work is not so great in some respect, as the killing the fierceness of Nature, the silencing the swelling Waves in the heart, and the casting out those brutish Affections which are born and grow up with us. There would be no, or far less resistance in a meer Animal to be chang'd into a Creature of a higher rank, than there is in a Natural Man to be turned into a serious Christian.

There



There is in every Natural Man a stoutness of heart, a stiff-neck, unwillingness to good, forwardness to evil : Infinite Power quells this stoutness, demolisheth these strong holds, turns this wild *Ass* in her course, and routs those Armies of turbulent Nature against the Grace of God. To stop the Floods of the *Sea* is not such an act of Power, as to turn the Tyde of the Heart. This Power hath been employ'd upon every Convert in the World ; What would you say then, if you knew all the Channells in which it hath run since the days of *Adam* ? If the alteration of one Rocky heart into a Pool of Water be a wonder of Power, what then is the calming and sweetning by his Word those *One hundred forty four Thousand* of the Tribes of *Israel*, and that numberless Multitude of all *Nations* and *People* that shall stand *before the Throne*\*, which were all naturally so many raging *Seas* ? Not one Converted Soul from *Adam* to the last that shall be in the End of the World, but is a Trophy of the Divine Conquest. None were pure Volunteers, nor list themselves in his Service, till he put forth his strong Arm to draw them to him. No mans Understanding but was chain'd with *Darkness*, and fond of it ; no Man but had *Corruption* in his Will, which was dearer to him than any thing else which could be propos'd for his True happiness. These things are most evident in Scripture and Experience.

\* Revel. 7.

2. As 'tis wrought against the Inclinations of Nature ; so against a multitude of *Corrupt habits rooted in the Souls of Men*. A distemper in its first invasion may more easily be cured, than when it becomes Chronical and inveterate. The strength of a Disease, or the complication of many, magnifies the Power of the *Physician*, and efficacy of the Medicine that tames and expels it. What Power is that which hath made Men stoop, when *Natural habits* have been grown Giants by Custom ; when the *putrefaction of Nature* hath engendred a multitude of Worms ; when the *Ulcers* are many and deplorable ; when *many Cords*, wherewith God would have bound the *Sinner*, have been broken, and (like *Sampson*) the wicked Heart hath gloried in its strength and grown more proud, that it hath stood like a *strong Fort* against those Batteries, under which others have fallen flat ?

Every *Proud thought*, every *Evil habit* captivated, serves for matter of Triumph to the *Power of God*†. What resistance will a multitude of them make, when one of them is enough to hold the Faculty under its dominion, and intercept its Operations ? So many *Customary habits*, so many *Old natures*, so many *different strengths* added to Nature, every one of them standing as a *Barricade* against the way of Grace ; all the Errors the *Understanding* is possessed with, think the *Gospel* Folly ; all the Vices the *Will* is filled with, count it the Fetter and Band. Nothing so contrary to Man, as to be thought a *Fool* ; nothing so contrary to Man, as to enter into *slavery*. 'Tis no easie matter to plant the *Cross* of Christ upon a Heart guided by many Principles against the Truth of it, and byast by a World of Wickedness against the Holiness of it. Nature renders a Man too feeble and indispos'd, and *Custom* renders a Man more weak and unwilling to *change* his Hue‡. To dispossess Man then of his Self-esteem and Self-excellency ; to make room for God in the Heart, where there was none but for *Sin*, as dear to him as himself ; to hurl down the *Pride of Nature* ; to make stout *Imaginations* stoop to the *Cross* ; to make *desires of Self-advancement* sink under a *Zeal for the glorifying of God*, and an *over-ruling design for his Honour*, is not to be ascrib'd to any, but an Out-stretched Arm wielding the *Sword of the Spirit*. To have a Heart full of the *Fear of God*, that was just before filled with a *Contempt* of him ; to have a sense of his *Power*, an eye to his *Glory*, admiring Thoughts of his *Wisdom*, a Faith in his *Truth*, that had lower Thoughts of him and all his Perfections, than he had of a Creature : To have a *hatred* of his Habitual Lusts, that had brought him in much Sensitive pleasure ; to *loath* them as much as he *loved* them ; to *cherish* the Duties he hated ; to live by *Faith* in, and *Obedience* to the Redeemer, who was before so heartily under the conduct of *Satan* and *Self* ; to chase the acts of Sin from his *Members*, and the pleasing thoughts of Sin from his *Mind* ; to make a stout Wretch willingly fall down, crawl upon the ground, and adore that *Saviour* whom before he out-dar'd, is a Triumphant Act of Infinite Power that can *subdue all things to it self*, and break those multitude of Locks and Bolts that were upon us.

† 2 Cor. 10. 5.

‡ Jer. 13. 23.

3. Against



3. *Against a multitude of Temptations and Interests.* The Temptations Rich Men have in this World are so numerous and strong, that the entrance of one of them into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, that is, the entertainment of the *Gospel* is made by our Saviour an *impossible thing with Men*, and procurable only by the *Power of God* \*. The Divine Strength only can separate the World from the Heart, and the Heart from the World. There must be an Incomprehensible Power to chase away the *Devil*, that had so long, so strong a footing in the Affections, to render the Soyl he had sown with so many *Tares* and *Weeds*, capable of good Grain; to make Spirits, that had found the sweetness of Worldly prosperity, wrapt up all their Happiness in it, and not only bent down, but (as it were) buried in Earth and Mud, to be loosened from those beloved Cords, to disrelish the Earth for a *Crucified Christ*; I say, this must be the effect of an Almighty Power.

\* Luke 18. 24.  
Eph. 1. 19.

4. *The Manner of Conversion* shews no less the Power of God. There is not only an irresistible Force used in it, but an agreeable Sweetness. The Power is so Efficacious, that nothing can vanquish it; and so Sweet, that none did ever complain of it. The Almighty Vertue displays it self Invincibly, yet without Constraint; compelling the *Will* without offering Violence to it, and making it cease to be Will: Not forcing it, but changing it; not dragging it, but drawing it; making it *will* where before it *will'd*; removing the Corrupt Nature of the Will, without invading the Created Nature and Rights of the Faculty; not working in us against the Physical nature of the Will, but working *to will* †. This work is therefore called *Creation*, *Resurrection*, to shew its Irresistible Power; 'Tis called *Illumination*, *Perswasion*, *Drawing*, to shew the suitableness of its Efficacy to the nature of the Humane Faculties: 'Tis a *drawing with Cords*, which testifies an Invincible strength; but, with *Cords of Love*, which testifies a Delightful conquest: 'Tis hard to determine whether it be more Powerful than Sweet, or more Sweet than Powerful. 'Tis no mean part of the Power of God to twist together *Victory* and *Pleasure*; to give a blow as delightful as strong, as pleasing to the Sufferer, as it is sharp to the Sinner.

† Phil. 2. 13.

II. The Power of God in the application of Redemption is evident in the *Pardoning a Sinner*.

1. *In the Pardon it self.* The Power of God is made the ground of his *Patience*; or the reason why he is Patient, is, because he would *shew his Power* ‖. 'Tis a part of Magnanimity to pass by Injuries: As weaker Stomacks cannot concoct the tougher food, so weak Minds cannot digest the harder Injuries; He that passes over a Wrong, is superiour to his Adversary that does it. When God speaks of his own Name as *Merciful*, he speaks first of himself as *Powerful*. *Exod. 34. 6. The Lord, the Lord God*, that is, the Lord the strong Lord, *Jehovah* the strong *Jehovah*. *Let the Power of my Lord be great*, saith *Moses*, when he prays for the Forgiveness of the People \*: The word *Jigdal* is written with a great *Jod*, or a *Jod* above the other Letters. The *Power of God* in Pardoning is advanc'd beyond an ordinary strain, beyond the Creative strength. In the Creation, he had power over the Creatures; in *this*, power over himself: In Creation, not Himself, but the Creatures were the Object of his Power; in that, no Attribute of his Nature could article against his Design. In the Pardon of a Sinner, after many Overtures made to him and refus'd by him, God exerciseth a power over himself; for the Sinner hath dishonour'd God, provok'd his *Justice*, abus'd his *Goodness*, done injury to all those Attributes which are necessary to his relief: It was not so in Creation, nothing was incapable of disobliging God from bringing it into Being. The *Dust*, which was the Matter of *Adams* Body, need'd only the extrinseck Power of God to form it into a *Man*, and inspire it with a *living Soul*: It had not render'd it self obnoxious to Divine Justice, nor was capable to excite any disputes between his Perfections. But after the entrance of *Sin*, and the merit of *Death*, thereby there was a resistance in Justice to the free Remission of Man: God was to exercise a Power over himself, to answer his *Justice*, and pardon the *Sinner*; as well as a power over the Creature, to reduce the Run-away and Rebel. Unless we have recourse to the Infiniteness of Gods Power, the infiniteness of our *Guilt* will weigh us down: We must consider not only

‖ Rom. 9. 22.

\* Num. 14. 17.  
Exod. 34. 6.  
Exalted.  
Sept. כח  
Strength, etc.



only that we have a mighty Guilt to press us, but a mighty God to relieve us. In the same act of his being our Righteousness, he is our Strength: *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength*, *Isai. 45. 24.*

2. *In the sense of Pardon.* When the Soul hath been wounded with the sense of sin, and its Iniquities have star'd it in the face; the raising the Soul from a despairing condition, and lifting it above those Waters which terrified it; to cast the light of Comfort, as well as the light of Grace, into a heart covered with more than an *Egyptian* Darkness, is an act of his Infinite and Creating Power; *Isai. 57. 19. I create the fruit of the lips, peace.* Men may wear out their Lips with numbring up the Promises of Grace and Arguments of Peace; but all will signify no more without a Creative Power, than it all Men and Angels should call to that White upon the Wall to shine as splendidly as the *Sun*. God only can create *Jerusalem*, and every Child of *Jerusalem* a rejoicing\*. A Man is no more able to apply to himself any word of Comfort under the sense of Sin, than he is able to Convert himself, and turn the proposals of the Word into gracious Affections in his heart. To restore the joy of Salvation, is in *Dauid's* Judgment an act of Sovereign Power, equal to that of creating a clean heart, *Psal. 51. 10, 12.* Alas, 'tis a state like to that of *Death*; as Infinite Power can only raise from Natural death, so from a Spiritual death, also from a Comfortless death: *In his favour there is life*; in the want of his Favour there is death. The Power of God hath so placed Light in the *Sun*, that all Creatures in the World, all the Torches upon Earth kindled together cannot make it Day, if that doth not rise: so all the Angels in Heaven and Men upon Earth, are not competent Chirurgions for a wounded Spirit. The cure of our Spiritual Ulcers, and the pouring in Balm, is an Act of Sovereign Creative Power: 'Tis more visible in silencing a Tempestuous Conscience, than the Power of our Saviour was in the stilling the stormy Winds and the roaring Waves. As none but Infinite Power can remove the Guilt of Sin, so none but Infinite Power can remove the Despairing sense of it.

III. This Power is evident in the preserving Grace. As the Providence of God is a manifestation of his Power in a continued Creation; so the preservation of Grace, is a manifestation of his Power in a continued Regeneration. To keep a Nation under the Yoke, is an act of the same Power that subdu'd it. 'Tis this that strengthens Men in suffering against the Fury of Hell; 'tis this that keeps them from falling against the force of Hell, the Fathers hand, *John 10. 29.* His strength abates and moderates the violence of Temptations; his Staff sustains his People under them; his Might defeats the Power of Satan, and bruises him under a Believers feet. The Counterworkings of Indwelling Corruption; the reluctances of the Flesh against the breathings of the Spirit; the fallacy of the Senses and the roivings of the Mind, have ability quickly to stifle and extinguish Grace, if it were not maintain'd by that Powerful blast that first in-breathed it. No less Power is seen in perfecting it, than was in planting it; || 2 *Pet. 1. 3.* no less in fulfilling the work of Faith, than in ingrafting the Word of Faith, 2 *Thess. 1. 11.*

The Apostle well understood the Necessity and Efficacy of it in the preservation of Faith, as well as in the first infusion, when he expresses himself in those terms of a Greatness or Hyperbole of Power, his Mighty Power, or the Power of his Might, *Ephes. 1. 19.* The Salvation he bestows, and the Strength whereby he effects it, are joyned together in the Prophets Song, *Isai. 12. 2. The Lord is my strength and my salvation:* And indeed, God doth more magnifie his Power in continuing a Believer in the World, a weak and half-rigg'd Vessel, in the midst of so many Sands whereon it might split; so many Rocks whereon it might dash; so many Corruptions within, and so many Temptations without; than if he did immediately transport him into Heaven, and cloth him with a perfectly Sanctified Nature.

To Conclude: What is there then in the World which is destitute of Notices of Divine Power? Every Creature affords us the Lesson; all acts of Divine Government are the marks of it. Look into the Word, and the manner of its propagation instructs



us in it; your *Changed Natures*, your *Pardoned Guilt*, your *Shining Comfort*, your *quell'd Corruptions*, the standing of your *staggering Graces*, are sufficient to preserve a sense, and prevent a forgetfulness of this great Attribute, so necessary for your support, and conducing so much to your comfort.

Uses.

I. Of Information and Instruction.

1. If Incomprehensible and Infinite Power belongs to the Nature of God, then *Jesus Christ hath a Divine Nature, because the Acts of Power proper to God are ascribed to him.* This Perfection of Omnipotence doth unquestionably pertain to the Deity, and is an incommunicable Property, and the same with the Essence of God: He therefore to whom this Attribute is ascribed, is essentially God.

This is challenged by Christ in conjunction with Eternity; *Revel. 1. 8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.* This the Lord Christ speaks of himself. He who was equal with God, proclaims himself by the Essential title of the Godhead, part of which he repeats again *verse 11.* and this is the Person which *walks in the midst of the seven Golden Candlesticks*; the Person that *was dead and now lives*, *vers. 17, 18.* which cannot possibly be meant of the Father, the first Person, who can never come under that denomination of *having been dead.* Being therefore adorn'd with the same Title, he hath the same Deity; and though his Omnipotence be only positively asserted, *v. 8.* yet his Eternity being asserted, *v. 11, 17.* it inferreth his Immense Power; for he that is Eternal without limits of Time, must needs be conceived Powerful, without any dash of Infirmary.

\* *Isai 9. 6.*

Again, when He is said to be a *Child born* and a *Son given*, in the same breath he is called the *Mighty God*\*. 'Tis introduc'd as a ground of Comfort to the Church, to preserve their Hopes in the accomplishment of the Promises made to them before. They should not imagine him to have only the Infirmary of a Man, though he was vail'd in the Appearance of a Man. No, they should look through the disguise of his *Flesh*, to the Might of his *Godhead*. The Attribute of *Mighty* is added to the Title *GOD*, because the consideration of Power is most capable to sustain the drooping Church in such a condition, and to prop up her hopes. 'Tis upon this account he saith of himself, that *whatsoever things the Father doth, those also doth the Son likewise*, *John 5. 19.* In creation of Heaven, Earth, Sea, and the Preservation of all Creatures, the Son works with the same Will, Wisdom, Vertue, Power, as the Father works: Not as two may concur in an Action in a different manner; as an Agent and an Instrument, a Carpenter and his Tools; but in the same manner of operation, *equus*, which we Translate *Likeness*, which doth not express so well the Emphasis of the word. There is no diversity of Action between Us; what the Father doth, that I do by the same Power, with the same easiness in every respect; there is the same Creative, Productive, Conservative Power in both of us; and that not in one work that is done *ad extra*, but in All, in whatsoever the Father doth. In the same manner; not by a delegated, but Natural and Essential Power, by one undivided operation and manner of working.

1. The Creation, which is a work of Omnipotence, is more than once ascrib'd to him. This he doth own himself; the Creation of the Earth, and of Man upon it; the stretching out the Heavens by his Hands, and the forming of all the Host of them by his Command, *Isai. 45. 12.* He is not only the Creator of Israel, the Church, *verse 12.* but of the whole World, and every Creature on the face of the Earth, and in the Glories of the Heavens; which is repeated also *verse 18.* where in this act of Creation he is called God himself, and speaks of himself in the Term *Je-hovah*; and swears by himself, *verse 23.* What doth he swear? *That unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.* Is this Christ? Yes, if the Apostle may be believed, who applies it to him *Rom. 14. 11.* to prove the Appearance of all Men before the Judgment Seat of Christ, whom the Prophet calls, *verse 15.* a God



God that hides himself; and so he was a hidden God when obscur'd in our fleshly Infirmities. He was in conjunction with the Father when the *Sea* receiv'd his Decree, and the foundations of the *Earth* were appointed; not as a Spectator, but as an Artificer, or so the word in *Prov.* 8. 30. signifies, *As one brought up with him*; it signifies also, *A cunning workman*\*. He was the *East*, or the *Sun* from whence sprang all the light of life and Being to the Creature; so the word *אֶרֶץ* *verse* 22. which is translated *Before his works of old*, is rendred by some, and signifies the *East* as well as *Before*: But if it notes only his existence before, 'tis enough to prove his Deity. \* Cant. 7. 1.

The *Scripture* doth not only allow him an existence before the World, but exalts him as the cause of the World: A thing may precede another that is not the cause of that which follows; a precedency in Age doth not entitle one Brother or thing the cause of another: But our *Saviour* is not only Ancienter than the World, but is the Creator of the World, *Heb.* 1. 10, 11. *Who laid the foundations of the Earth, and the Heavens are the works of his hands*. So great an Elogy cannot be given to one destitute of Omnipotence. Since the distance between *Being* and *not Being* is so vast a Gulf that cannot be surmounted and stept over, but by an Infinite Power: He is the *First* and the *Last*, that called the *Generations from the beginning*†, and had an Almighty voice to call them out of Nothing. In which regard he is called the *Everlasting Father*, *Isai.* 9. 6. as being the Efficient of Creation; as God is called the *Father of the Rain*, or as *Father* is taken for the Inventor of an Art; as *Jubal*, the first framer and Inventor of Musick, is called the *Father of such as handle the Harp*, *Gen.* 4. 21. And that Person is said to *make the Sea, and form the dry Land by his hands*, *Psal.* 95. 5, 6. against whom we are exhorted not to *harden our hearts*, *verse* 8. which is applied to *Christ* by the *Apostle*, *Heb.* 3. 8. in the 15 *verse* he is called a great *King*, and a great *God our Maker*. The Places wherein the Creation is attributed to *Christ*, those that are the Antagonists of his *Deity*, would evade by understanding them of the New or Evangelical, not of the first, Old and Material Creation: But what appearance is there for such a sense? Consider,

1. That of *Heb.* 1. 10, 11. 'tis spoken of that *Earth* and *Heavens* which were in the *beginning* of Time; 'tis that *Earth* that *shall perish*, that *Heaven* that *shall be folded up*, that Creation that shall *grow old* towards a decay; that is, only the visible and material Creation: The Spiritual shall endure for ever; it grows not old to decay, but grows up to a perfection; it sprouts up to its happiness, not to its detriment. The same Person creates that shall destroy, and the same World is created by him that shall be destroyed by him, as well as it subsisted by virtue of his Omnipotency.

2. Can that also *Heb.* 1. 2. *By whom also he made the worlds*, speaking of *Christ*, bear the same plea? It was the same Person by whom *God* spake to us in these last times, the same Person which he hath constituted *Heir of all things*, *by whom also he made the worlds*: And the Particle *Also*, intimates it to be a distinct act from his Speaking or Prophetical Office, whereby he restored and new created the World, as well as the rightful foundation *God* had to make him *Heir of all things*. It refers likewise, not to the time of *Christ*'s speaking upon *Earth*; but to something past, and something different from the publication of the Gospel: 'Tis not, *doth make*, which had been more likely if the *Apostle* had meant only the New Creation; but *hath made* ||, referring to time long since past, something done before his appearance upon *Earth* as a Prophet. *By whom also he made the Worlds, or Ages*, all things subjected to, or measured by Time; which must be meant according to the Jewish Phrase of this Material visible World: So they entitle *God* in their Liturgy, the *Lord of Ages*, that is, the *Lord of the World, and all Ages and Revolutions of the World, from the Creation to the last Period of Time*. If any thing were in Being before this frame of *Heaven* and *Earth*, and within the compass of Time, it receiv'd Being and Duration from the Son of *God*. The *Apostle* would give an Argument to prove the equity of making him *Heir of all things as Mediator*, because he was the *Framer of all things as God*. He may well be the *Heir or Lord of Angels* as well as *Men*, who created *Angels* as well as *Men*: All things were justly under his Power as *Mediator*, since they deriv'd their Existence from him as *Creator*. || *Isai.* 41. 4.

3. But Thirdly, what evasion can there be for that *Coloss.* 1. 16. *By him were all things created that are in Heaven and that are in Earth, whether they be Thrones,*



or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers, all things were created by him and for him. He is said to be the Creator of Material and Visible things, as well as Spiritual and Invisible; of things in Heaven, which needed no restoration, as well as things on Earth, which were polluted by Sin, and stood in need of a new Creation. How could the Angels belong to the new Creation, who had never put off the honour and purity of the first? Since they never divested themselves of their original Integrity, they could not be reinvested with that which they never lost. Besides, suppose the Holy Angels be one way or other reduc'd as parts of the new Creation, as being under the Mediatory Government of our Saviour, as their Head, and in regard of their confirmation by him in that happy state. In what manner shall the Devils be rank'd among new Creatures? They are called *Principalities and Powers* as well as the Angels, and may come under the Title of *Things invisible*: That they are called *Principalities and Powers* is plain, *Ephes. 6. 12. For we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities and Powers, the Rulers of the Darkness of this World; against Spiritual wickedness in high places.* Good Angels are not there meant, for what War have Believers with them, or they with Believers? They are the Guardians of them, since Christ hath taken away the Enmity between our Lord and theirs, in whose quarrel they were engag'd against us: And since the Apostle speaking of *All things created by him*, expresseth it so, that it cannot be conceived he should except any thing; how come the finally Impenitent and Unbelievers, which are *Things in Earth*, and visible, to be list'd here in the Roll of *New Creatures*? None of these can be called *New Creatures*, because they are subjected to the Government of Christ; no more than the *Earth and Sea*, and the Animals in it, are made *New Creatures*, because they are all under the Dominion of Christ and his Providential Government. Again, the Apostle manifestly makes the Creation he here speaks of, to be the Material, and not the New Creation; for that he speaks of afterwards as a distinct act of our Lord Jesus under the Title of *Reconciliation*, *Coloss. 1. 20, 21.* which was the restoration of the World, and the satisfying for that *Curse* that lay upon it. His intent is here to shew, that not an Angel in Heaven, nor a Creature upon Earth, but was placed in their several degrees of excellency by the Power of the Son of God, who after that act of Creation and the entrance of Sin, was the *Reconciler of the World through the Blood of his Cross.*

4. There is another place as clear, *John 1. 3. All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made that was made.* The Creation is here ascrib'd to him; Affirmatively, *All things were made by him*; Negatively, *There was nothing made without him*: And the Words are Emphatical, *in w.* *Not one thing*; excepting nothing; including invisible things, as well as things conspicuous to sense only, mentioned in the story of the Creation, *Gen. 1.* not only the intire Mass, but the distinct parcels, the smallest Worm and the highest Angel, owe their Original to him. And if not *one thing*, then the Matter was not created to his hands; and his work consist'd not only in the forming things from that Matter: If that *one thing* of Matter were excepted, a chief thing were excepted; if not *one thing* were excepted, then he created Something of Nothing, because Spirits, as Angels and Souls, are not made of any pre-existing or fore-created Matter. How could the Evangelist phrase it more extensively and comprehensively? This is a Character of *Omnipotency*; to create the World, and every thing in it, of Nothing, requires an Infinite Virtue and Power. If all things were created by him, they were not created by him *as Man*, because Himself, as Man, was not in Being before the Creation: If all things were made by him, then Himself was not made, Himself was not created; and to be existent without being made, without being created, is to be unboundedly Omnipotent. And if we understand it of the New Creation, as they do that will not allow him an existence in his *Desty* before his *Humani-ty*, it cannot be true of that; for how could he regenerate *Abraham*, make *Simon* and *Anna* new Creatures, who waited for the salvation of *Israel*, and form *John Baptist* and fill him with the Holy Ghost even from the womb\* (who belong'd to the new Creation, and was to prepare the way) if Christ had not a Being before him? The Evangelist alludes to, and explains the History of the Creation in the beginning, and acquaints us what was meant by God said, so often, *viz. the Eternal Word,* and

\* Luke 1. 15.



and describes him in his Creative Power, manifested in the framing the World; before he describes him in his Incarnation, when he came to lay the Foundation of the restoration of the World, *John 1.14. The Word was made flesh*; this Word who was *with God, who was God, who made all things*, and gave Being to the most glorious Angels and the meanest Creature without exception; this Word, in time, *was made flesh*.

5. The Creation of things mentioned in these *Scriptures* cannot be attributed to him as an Instrument. As it when it is said, *God created all things by him, and by him made the Worlds*, we were to understand the Father to be the Agent, and the Son to be a Tool in his Fathers hand, as an Ax in the hand of a Carpenter, or a File in the hand of a Smith, or a Servant acting by Command as the Organ of his Master. The Preposition *Per*, or *à*, doth not alway signifie an Instrumental cause: When it is said, that the *Apostle* gave the *Thessalonians* a Command *by Jesus Christ*, *1 Thess. 4.2.* was Christ the Instrument, and not the Lord of that Command the *Apostle* gave? The immediate Operation of Christ dwelling in the *Apostles*, was that whereby they gave the Commands to their Disciples. When we are called *by God*, *1 Cor. 1.9.* Is he the Instrumental, or Principal cause of our effectual Vocation? And can the Will of God be the Instrument of putting *Paul* into the Apostleship, or the Sovereign cause of investing him with that Dignity, when he calls himself an *Apostle by the will of God? Ephes. 1.3.* And when all things are said to be *through God*, as well as *of him*, must he be counted the Instrumental cause of his own Creation, Counsels, and Judgments\*? When we *mortifie the deeds of the Body through the Spirit, Rom. 8.13.* or keep the *Treasure of the Word by the Holy Ghost, 2 Tim. 1.14.* Is the Holy Ghost of no more dignity in such acts than Instrument? Nor doth the gaining a thing *by* a Person make him a meer Instrument or Inferior; as when a Man gains his Right in a way of Justice against his Adversary by the Magistrate, is the Judge inferiour to the Suppliant? If the Word were an Instrument in Creation, it must be a created or uncreated Instrument: If Created, it could not be true what the *Evangelist* saith, that *All things were made by him*, since himself the Principal thing could not be made by himself; if Uncreated, he was God, and so acted by a Divine Omnipotency, which surmounts an Instrumental cause. But indeed, an Instrument is impossible in Creation, since it is wrought only by an act of the Divine Will. Do we need any Organ to an act of Volition? the efficacious Will of the Creator is the cause of the Original of the Body of the World, with its particular Members and exact Harmony: It was form'd *by a Word* and establish'd *by a Command*†; † *Psalm 33.9.* the beauty of the Creation stood up at the Precept of his Will. Nor was the Son a Partial cause; as when many are said to build a House, one works one part, and another frames another part: God created all things by the immediate operation of the Son, in the unity of Essence, Goodness, Power, Wisdom; not an extrinick, but a connatural Instrument. As the *Sun* doth illustrate all things by his Light, and quickens all things by his Heat; so God created the Worlds *by Christ*, as he was the *brightness or splendor of his Glory, the exact image of his Person*; which follows the declaration of his making the Worlds *by him*||, to shew, that he acted not as an Instrument, but one in Essential conjunction with him; as Light and Brightness with the *Sun*. But suppose he did make the World as a kind of Instrument, He was then before the World, not bounded by Time; and Eternity cannot well be conceiv'd belonging to a Being without Omnipotency: He is the End as well as the Author of the Creatures\*; not only the Principle which gave \* *Colos. 1.16.* them Being, but the Sea into whose glory they run and dissolve themselves, which consists not with the meanness of an Instrument.

2. As Creation, so *Preservation is ascribed to him, Colos. 1.17. By him all things consist.* As he preceded all things in his Eternity, so he establishes all things by his Omnipotency, and fixes them in their several Centers, that they sink not into that nothing from whence he fetched them. By him they flourish in their several Beings, and observe the Laws and Orders he first appointed: That Power of his which extracted them from insensible Nothing, upholds them in their several Beings with the same facility as he spake Being into them, even *by the word of his Power*||, and by one Creative continued Voice called all Generations from || *Heb. 1.3.* the



\* Mai. 41.4.

the beginning to the Period of the World\*, and causes them to flourish in their several seasons. 'Tis by him Kings reign, and Princes decree justice, and all things are confin'd within the limits of Government. All which are Acts of an Infinite Power.

† Phil. 3.21:

3. *Resurrection is also ascrib'd to him.* The Body crumbled to Dust, and that Dust blown to several quarters of the World, cannot be gathered in its distinct parts, and new formed for the entertainment of the Soul, without the strength of an Infinite Arm. This he will do and more; change the vileness of an Earthly Body into the glory of an Heavenly one; a Dusty flesh into a Spiritual Body, which is an argument of a Power Invincible, to which all things cannot but sloop; for it is by such an operation, which testifies an ability to subdue all things to himself†; especially when he works it with the same ease as he did the Creation, by the power of his Voice. *John 5.28. All that are in the Graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth*: Speaking them into a restored life from insensible Dust, as he did into Being from an empty Nothing. The greatest acts of Power are own'd to belong to Creation, Preservation, Resurrection: Omnipotence therefore is his Right; and therefore a Deity cannot be denied to him that inherits a Perfection essential to none but God, and impossible to be intrusted in, or managed by the hands of any Creatures:

[Psal. 89.19.

And this is no mean comfort to those that believe in him: He is, in regard of his Power, *the Horn of salvation*; so *Zachariah* sings of him, *Luke 1.69.* Nor could there be any more *Mighty* found out upon whom God could have *laid our help*||. No reason therefore to doubt his ability to save to the utmost, who hath the Power of *Creation, Preservation, and Resurrection* in his hands. His Promises must be accomplished, since nothing can resist him: He hath Power to fulfil his Word, and bring all things to a final issue, because he is *Almighty*; by his Outstretched Arm in the Deliverance of his *Israel* from *Egypt*, (for it was his Arm *1 Cor. 10.*) he shewed that he was able to deliver us from *Spiritual Egypt*. The charge of Mediator to expiate Sin, vanquish Hell, form a Church, conduct and perfect it, are not to be effected by a Person of less ability than Infinite. Let this *Almightiness* of his be the Bottom, wherein to cast and fix the Anchor of our Hopes.

\* Gen. 1.2. So the word Moved properly signifies.

2. Information. Hence may be inferred the Deity of the Holy Ghost. Works of Omnipotency are ascrib'd to the Spirit of God: By the motion of the Wings of this Spirit, as a Bird over her Eggs, was that rude and unshapen Mass hatcht into a comly World\*. The Stars, or perhaps the Angels, are meant by the garnishing of the Heavens in the Verse before the Text, were brought forth in their comeliness and dignity, as the ornaments of the upper World, by this Spirit; By his Spirit he hath garnished the Heavens. To this Spirit Job ascribes the formation both of the Body and Soul under the Title of *Almighty*, *Job 33.4. The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.* Resurrection, another work of Omnipotency is attributed to him, *Rom. 8.11.* The Conception of our Saviour in the Womb; the Miracles that he wrought, were by the Power of the Spirit in him. Power is a Title belonging to him, and sometimes both are put together, *1 Thess. 1.5.* and other places. And that great Power of changing the Heart, and sanctifying a polluted Nature, a work greater than Creation, is frequently acknowledged in the Scripture to be the peculiar act of the Holy Ghost. The Father, Son, Spirit, are one Principle in Creation, Resurrection, and all the Works of Omnipotence.

† Sal unde, Tit. 39.

3. Inference from the Doctrine. The Blessedness of God is hence evidenc'd. If God be Almighty, he can want nothing; all want speaks Weakness. If he doth what he will, he cannot be miserable; all Misery consists in those things which happen contrary to our will. There is nothing can hinder his Happiness, because nothing can resist his Power. Since he is Omnipotent nothing can hurt him, nothing can strip him of what he hath, of what he is†. If he can do whatsoever he will, he cannot want any thing that he wills: He is as happy, as great, as glorious, as he will; for he hath a perfect liberty of Will to will, and a perfect Power to attain what he will; His Will cannot be restrained, nor his Power mated. It would be a defect in Blessedness, to Will what he were not able to do: *Serrato*



is the result of a want of Power, with a presence of Will. \* If he could Will any thing which he could not effect, he would be miserable, and no longer God: He can do whatsoever he pleases, and therefore can want nothing that pleases him. He cannot be happy, the original of whose Happiness is not in himself: Nothing can be infinitely happy, that is limited and bounded.

4. Hence is a ground for the *Immutability of God*. As he is incapable of changing his Resolves, because of his Infinite Wisdom; so he is incapable of being forced to any Change, because of his Infinite Power. Being *Almighty*, He can be no more chang'd from Power to Weakness; than being *All-wise*, He can be chang'd from Wisdom to Folly; or being *Omniscient*, from Knowledge to Ignorance. He cannot be alter'd in his Purposes, because of his *Wisdom*; nor in the manner and method of his Actions, because of his *Infinite strength*. Men indeed, when their Designs are laid deepest, and their Purposes stand firmest, yet are forced to stand still, or change the manner of the execution of their Resolves, by reason of some outward Accidents that obstruct them in their course; for having not Wisdom to foresee future hindrances, they have not power to prevent them, or strength to remove them, when they unexpectedly interpose themselves between their desire and performance: But no created Power has strength enough to be a bar against God. By the same act of his Will that he resolves a thing, He can puff away any Impediments that seem to rise up against him. He that wants no Means to effect his Purposes, cannot be check'd by any thing that riseth up to stand in his way: *Heaven, Earth, Sea*, the deepest places, are too weak to resist his Will †. The Purity of the *Angels* will not, and the *Devils* Malice cannot frustrate his Will; the one voluntarily obeys the beck of his hand, and the other are vanquish'd by the Power of it. What can make him change his Purposes, who (if he please) can dash the *Earth* against the *Heavens* in the twinkling of an Eye, untying the World from its Center, clap the *Stars* and *Elements* together into one Mass, and blow the whole Creation of *Men* and *Devils* into Nothing. Because he is Almighty, therefore he is Immutable.

5. Hence is inferred the *Providence of God, and his Government of the World*. His Power as well as his Wisdom gives him a right to Govern: Nothing can equal him, therefore nothing can share the Command with him; since All things are his Works, 'tis fittest they should be under His Order: He that frames a work, is fittest to guide and govern it. God hath the most Right to Govern, because he hath Knowledge to direct his Power, and Power to execute the Results of his Wisdom: He knows what is convenient to order, and hath Strength to effect what he orders. As his Power would be oppressive without *Goodness* and *Wisdom*; so his Goodness and Wisdom would be fruitless without Power. An Artificer that hath lost his Hands may direct, but cannot make an Engine: A Pilot that hath lost his Arms, may advise the way of Steerage, but cannot hold the Helm; something is wanting in him to be a compleat Governour: But since both *Counsel* and *Power* are Infinite in God, hence results an Infinite Right to Govern, and an Infinite Fitness, because his Will cannot be resisted, his Power cannot be enfeebled or diminish'd; he can quicken and increase the strength of all Means as he pleases. He can hold all things in the World together, and preserve them in those Functions wherein he settled them, and conduct them to those ends for which he design'd them.

Every Artificer, the more Excellent he is, and the more Excellency of Power appears in his work, is the more careful to maintain and cherish it. These that deny Providence, do not only ravish from him the bowels of his *Goodness*, but strip him of a main exercise of his *Power*, and engender in Men a suspicion of Weariness and Feebleness in him; as though his strength had been spent in making them, that none is left to guide them. They would make him Headless in regard of his *Wisdom*, and Bowless in regard of his *Goodness*, and Armless in regard of his *Strength*: If he did not, or were not able to preserve and provide for his Creatures, his Power in making them would be in a great part an Invisible Power; if he did not preserve what he made, and govern what he preserves, it would be a kind of strange and rude Power, to make, and suffer it to be dash'd in pieces at the pleasure of others. If the Power of God should relinquish the World, the life

\* Pont. Part 6.  
Med. 15 p 531.

† Psal. 135. 6.



of things would be extinguish'd, the Fabrick would be confounded and fall into a deplorable *Chaos*. That which is compos'd of so many various pieces, could not maintain its Union, if there were not a secret virtue binding them together and maintaining those varieties of links.

Well then, since God is not only so Good, that he cannot will any thing but what is good; so Wise, that he cannot erre or mistake; but also so Able, that he cannot be defeated or mated: He hath every way a full Ability to govern the World; where those Three are Infinite, the right and fitness resulting from thence is unquestionable: And indeed, to deny God this Active part of his Power, is to render him Weak, Foolish, Cruel, or all.

6. Here is a ground for the Worship of God. Wisdom and Power are the grounds of the Respect we give to Men; they being both infinite in God, are the foundation of a solemn Honour to be returned to him by his Creatures. If a Man make a curious Engine, we honour him for his Skill; If another vanquish a vigorous Enemy, we admire him for his Strength: And shall not the efficacy of Gods Power in *Creation, Government, Redemption*, enflame us with a sense of the Honour of his Name and Perfections? We admire those Princes that have vast Empires, numerous Armies, that have a Power to conquer their Enemies, and preserve their own People in peace: How much more ground have we to pay a mighty Reverence to God, who without Trouble and Weariness made and manages this vast Empire of the World by a Word and Beck? What sensible thoughts have we of the noise of Thunder, the power of the Sun, the storms of the Sea? These things that have no Understanding have struck Men with such a Reverence, that many have ador'd them as gods. What Reverence and Adoration doth this *Mighty Power*, joyn'd with an *Infinite Wisdom* in God, demand at our hands?

All Religion and Worship stands especially upon two Pillars, *Goodness* and *Power* in God; if either of these were defective, all Religion would faint away. We can expect no entertainment with him without *Goodness*, nor any benefit from him without *Power*. This God Prefaceth to the Command to Worship him, the benefit his *Goodness* had conferr'd upon them, and the *Powerful* manner of conveyance of it to them, *2 Kings 17. 36. The Lord brought you up from the Land of Egypt with great Power and an Out-stretched Arm; him shall you fear, and him shall you worship, and to him shall you do sacrifice.* Because this Attribute is a main foundation of Prayer, the *Lords Prayer* is concluded with a doxology of it, *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.* As he is Rich, possessing all Blessings; so he is Powerful, to confer all Blessings on us, and make them efficacious to us. \* The Jews repeat many times in their Prayers, some say an hundred times *מלך העולם* *The King of the World*; 'tis both an Awe and an Encouragement. We could not without consideration of it pray in Faith of success; nay we could not pray at all, if his *Power* were defective to help us, and his *Mercy* too weak to relieve us. Who would sollicite a Lifeless, or lie a prostrate Suppliant to a feeble Arm! Upon this Ability of God, Our Saviour built his Petitions; *Heb. 5. 7. He offered up strong Cries unto him that was able to save him from death.* Abraham's Faith hung upon the same string, *Rom. 4. 21.* and the Captiv'd Church supplicates God to act according to the greatness of his *Power*, *Psal. 79. 11.* In all our Addresses this is to be ey'd and considered, God is able to help, to relieve, to ease me, let my Misery be never so great and my Strength never so weak. *If thou wilt thou canst make me clean*, was the Consideration the *Leper* had when he came to worship Christ; he was clear in his *Power* and therefore worshipp'd him, though he was not equally clear in his *Will*. All *Worship* is shot wrong that is not directed to, and conducted by the thoughts of this Attribute, whose assistance we need. When we beg the Pardon of our Sins, we should eye *Mercy* and *Power*; when we beg his righting us in any case where we are unjustly oppress'd, we do not eye *Righteousness* without *Power*; when we plead the performance of his Promise, we do not regard his *Faithfulness* only without the Prop of his *Power*. As *Power* ushers in all the Attributes of God in their exercise and manifestation in the World, so should it be the Butt our eyes should be fixed upon in all our acts of Worship: As without his *Power* his other Attributes would be useless, so without due Apprehensions of his *Power* our Prayers will be Faithless

\* Capel. in  
1 Tim. 1. 17.

Matt. 2. 2.



Faithless and Comfortless. The Title in the *Lords Prayer* directs us to a prospect both of his *Goodness* and *Power*; his Goodness in the word *Father*, his Greatness, Excellency and Power in the word *Heaven*. The heedless Consideration of the Innumitens of this Perfection roops up *Piety* in the midst of us, and makes us so careless in Worship. Did we more think of that Power that rais'd the World out of nothing; that orders all Creatures by an act of his Will; that perform'd so great an Exploit, as that of our Redemption, when masterless sin had triumphed over the World, we should give God the honour and adoration which so great an excellency challengeth and deserves at our hands, though we our selves had not been the work of his hands, or the monuments of his strength; how could any Creature engross to it self that reverence from us which is due to the powerful Creator, of whom it comes infinitely short in strength as well as wisdom?

7. From this we have a ground for the belief of the *Resurrection*. God aims at the glory of his Power, as well as the glory of any other Attribute. *Moses* else would not have cull'd out this as the main Argument in his pleading with God, for the sheathing the Sword which he began to draw out against them in the Wilderness, *Numb. 14. 16. The Nations will say, because the Lord was not able to bring these People into the Land which he swore to them, &c.* As the finding out the particulars of the dust of our Bodies discovers the vastness of his Knowledge; so to raise them will manifest the glory of his Power as much as Creation: Bodies that have mouldred away into multitudes of Atoms, been resolved into the Elements, passed through varieties of changes; been sometimes the matter to lodge the form of a Plant, or been turned into the substance of a Fish or Foul, or vapour'd up into a Cloud, and been part of that matter which hath compacted a Thunder-bolt; dispos'd of in places far distant, scatter'd by the Winds, swallowed and concocted by Beasts; for these to be called out from their different places of abode to meet in one Body, and be restored to their former Consistency in a marriage union in the twinkling of an eye\*, 'tis a Consideration that may justly amaze us, and our shallow Understandings are too feeble to comprehend it. But is it not credible, since all the Disputes against it may be silenced by reflections on Infinite Power, which nothing can oppose, for which nothing can be esteemed too difficult to effect, which doth not imply a Contradiction in it self. It was no less amazing to the *blessed Virgin* to hear a Message that she should Conceive a Son without knowing a Man; but she is quickly answered by the Angel, with a *Nothing is impossible to God, Luke. 1. 34, 37.* The distinct parts of our Bodies cannot be hid from his All-seeing Eye, wherever they are lodged, and in all the Changes they pass through, as was discoursed when the Omniscience of God was handled; shall then the collection of them together be too hard for his Invincible Power and Strength, & the uniting all those parts into a Body, with new dispositions, to receive their several Souls, be too big and bulky for that Power which never yet was acquainted with any bar? Was not the Miracle of our Saviours multiplying the Loaves, suppose it had not been by a new Creation, but a collection of Grain from several parts, very near as stupendous as this? Had any one of us been the only Creatures made just before the matter of the World, and beheld that inform Chaos covered with a *thick darkness*, mentioned *Gen. 1. 2.* would not the Report, that from this dark deep, next to nothing, should be rais'd such a multitude of comely Creatures, with such innumerable varieties of Members, Voices, Colours, Motions, and such Numbers of shining Stars; a bright Sun, one uniform Body of Light from this Darkness, that should like a Giant, rejoyce to run a race for many thousands of years together, without stop or weariness: Would not all these have seem'd as incredible as the Collection of scattered Dust? What was it that erected the innumerable Host of Heaven, the glorious Angels, and glittering Stars, for ought we know, more numerous than the Bodies of Men, but an act of the Divine Will; and shall the Power that wrought this, sink under the Charge of gathering some dispers'd Atoms, and compacting them into a Human Body? † Can you tell how the Dust of the ground was kneaded by God into the Body of Man, and changed into Flesh, Skin, Hair, Bones, Sinews, Veins, Arteries and Blood, and fitted for so many several Activities, when a Human Soul was breath'd into it? Can you imagine how a Rib taken from *Adam's* side, a lifeless Bone was formed into Head, Hands, Feet, Eyes? Why may

1 Cor. 15. 22.

† Legend.  
Tom. 3. p. 225.  
73.

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not the matter of men which have been, be restor'd, as well as that which was not, be first erected? Is it harder to repair those things which were, than to create those things which were not? Is there not the same Artificer? Hath any Disease or Sickliness abated his Power? Is the *Ancient of days* grown feeble; or shall the Elements and other Creatures, that alway yet obeyed his Command, ruffle against his raising Voice, and refuse to disgorge those remains of Human Bodies, they have swallowed up in their several Bowels? Did the whole World, and all the parts of it rise at his word, and shall not some parts of the World, the Dust of the dead, stand up out of the Graves at a word of the same mighty Efficacy? Do we not annually see those Marks of Power which may stun our Incredulity in this Concern? Do you see in a small Acorn or little Seed, any such sights, as a Tree with Body, Bark, Branches, Leaves, Flowers, Fruit, where can you find them? Do you know the invisible Corners where they lurk in that little Body? And yet these you afterwards view rising up from this little Body, when sown in the Ground, that you could not possibly have any prospect of when you rould it in your hand, or opened its Bowels. And why may not all the particulars of our Bodies, however dispos'd as to their distinct Natures invisibly to us, remain distinct, as well as if you mingle a thousand Seeds together, they will come up in their distinct kinds, and preserve their distinct Vertues?

Again, Is not the Making Heaven and Earth, the Union of the Divine and Human Nature, Eternity and Infirmary, to make a Virgin conceive a Son, bear the Creator, and bring forth the Redeemer, to form the Blood of God of the Flesh of a Virgin, a greater Work than the Calling together and Uniting the scattered parts of our Bodies, which are all of one Nature and Matter? And since the Power of God is manifested in pardoning innumerable sins, is not the scattering our Transgressions, as far as the *East* is from the *West*, as the expression is *Psal. 103. 12.* and casting such numbers into the Depths of the Sea, which is Gods Power over himself, a greater Argument of *Might*, than the recalling and repairing the Atoms of our Bodies from their various receptacles? 'Tis not hard for them to believe this of the Resurrection, that have been sensible of the weight and force of their Sins, and the Power of God in pardoning and vanquishing that mighty resistance which was made in their Hearts against the power of his renewing and sanctifying Grace. The consideration of the Infinite Power of God, is a good ground of the belief of the Resurrection.

8. Since the Power of God is so great and Incomprehensible, *How strange is it, that it should be contemned and abused by the Creatures, as it is?* The Power of God is beaten down by some, outraged by others, blasphemed by many under their Sufferings. The stripping God of the honour of his Creation, and the glory of his Preservation of the World, falls under this charge: Thus do they that deny his framing the World alone, or thought the first matter was not of Gods creation; and such as fancied an Evil Principle, the Author of all Evil, as God is the Author of all good, and so exempt from the Power of God, that it could not be vanquish't by him. These things have formerly found Defenders in the World; but they are in themselves ridiculous and vain, and have no footing in common Reason, and are not worthy of debate in a Christian Auditory.

In *General*, All Idolatry in the World did arise from the want of a due Notion of this Infinite Power. The *Heathen* thought one God was was not sufficient for the managing all things in the World, and therefore they feign'd several gods that had several charges: As *Ceres* presid'd over the Fruits of the Earth; *Esculapius* over the Cure of Distempers; *Mercury* for Merchandize and Trade; *Mars* for War and Battles; *Apollo* and *Minerva* for Learning and Ingenious Arts; and *Fortune* for Casual things. Whence doth the other sort of Idolatry, the adoring our Bags and Gold, our dependencies on, and trusting in Creatures for help, arise, but from Ignorance of God's Power, or mean and slender Apprehensions of it?

First, There is a *Contempt* of it.

Secondly, An *Abuse* of it.

1. 'Tis contemn'd in every sin, especially in obstinacy in Sin. All Sin whatsoever is built upon some false Notion or monstrous Conception of one or other of Gods Perfe-



Perfections, and in particular of this. It includes a secret and lurking Imagination, that we are able to grapple with *Omnipotence*, and enter the lists with *Almightiness*; what else can be judged of the *Apostles* expression 1 Cor. 10. 22. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy, are we stronger than he?* Do we think we have an Arm too powerful for that Justice we provoke, and can repel that Vengeance we exasperate? Do we think we are an even match for God, and are able to despoil him of his Divinity? To despise his Will, violate his Order; practise what he forbids with a severe Threatning, and pawns his Power to make it good; is to pretend to have an *Arm like God*, and be able to *thunder* with a Voice equal or superior to him, as the expression is *Job* 40. 9. All Security in Sin is of this strain; When Men are not concerned at Divine Threatnings, nor stagger'd in their sinful Race, they intimate, that the Declarations of Divine Power are but Vain-glorious boastings; that God is not so strong and able, as he reports himself to be; and therefore they will venture it, and dare him to try, whether the strength of his Arm be as forcible as the Words of his Mouth are terrible in his Threats; this is to believe themselves Creators, not Creatures. We magnifie Gods Power in our wants, and debase it in our Rebellions; as though Omnipotence were only able to supply our Necessities, and unable to revenge the Injuries we offer him.

2. This Power is Contemn'd in *Distrust of God*. All *Distrust* is founded in a doubting of his Truth, as if he would not be as good as his Word; or of his Omniscience, as if he had not a Memory to retain his Word; or of his Power, as if He could not be as great as his Word. We measure the Infinite Power of God by the short Line of our Understandings, as if Infinite strength were bounded within the narrow compass of our Finite Reason; as if He could do no more than we were able to do.

How soon did those *Israelites* lose the Remembrance of Gods Outstretched Arm, when they utter'd that Atheistical Speech *Psal.* 78. 9. *Can God furnish a Table in the Wilderness?* As if he that turned the Dust of *Egypt* into *Lice*, for the punishment of their Oppressors, could not turn the Dust of the *Wilderness* into *Corn*, for the support of their Bodies? As if he that had Miraculously rebuked the *Red Sea*, for their Safety, could not provide *Bread*, for their Nourishment? Though they had seen the *Egyptians* with lost Lives in the Morning, in the same place where *Their* Lives had been miraculously preserved in the Evening; yet They disgrace that Experimented Power, by opposing to it the Stature of the *Anakims*, the Strength of their Cities, and the height of their Walls, *Numb.* 13. 32. And *Numb.* 14. 3. *Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this Land to fall by the Sword?* As though the *Giants* of *Canaan* were too strong for Him, for whom they had seen the Armies of *Egypt* too weak. How did they contract the Almighty of God into the littleness of a Little man, as if he must needs sink under the Sword of a *Canaanite*?

This *Distrust* must arise either from a flat *Atheism*, a denial of the Being of God, or his Government of the World; or unworthy Conceits of a Weakness in him, that he had made Creatures too hard for himself; that He were not strong enough to grapple with those mighty *Anakims*, and give them the possession of *Canaan* against so great a Force. *Distrust* of him implies either, that He was alway destitute of Power, or that his Power is exhausted by his former Works, or that it is limited and near a Period: 'Tis to deny him to be the Creator that moulded Heaven and Earth. Why should we by *Distrust* put a slight upon that Power which he hath so often exprest, and which in the minutest Works of his hands surmount the force of the sharpest Understanding?

3. 'Tis Contemn'd in too great a fear of Man, which ariseth from a distrust of Divine Power. Fear of Man, is a crediting the Might of Man with a disrepute of the Arm of God; it takes away the glory of his Might, and renders the Creature stronger than God, and God more feeble than a Mortal; as if the Arm of Man were a *Rod of Iron*, and the Arm of God a *brittle Reed*. How often do Men tremble at the Threatnings and Hectorings of *Ruffians*, yet will stand as Stakes a-

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gainst the Precepts and Threatnings of God, as though he had less Power to preserve us, than Enemies had to destroy? With what disdain doth God speak to Men infected with this humor? *Isai. 51. 12, 13. Who art thou, that art afraid of a Man that shall die, and of the Son of Man that shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the Heavens, and laid the foundation of the Earth; and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the Oppressor?*

To fear Man that is as Grass, that cannot think a Thought without a Divine concurrence, that cannot Breathe, but by a Divine Power, nor touch a Hair without License first granted from Heaven; This is a forgetfulness, and consequently a slight of that Infinite Power, which hath been manifested in founding the Earth and garnishing the Heavens. All Fear of Man, in the way of our Duty, doth in some sort thrust out the Remembrance, and discredit the great Actions of the Creator. Would not a Mighty Prince think it a Disparagement to him, if his Servant should decline his Command for fear of one of his Subjects? And hath not the Great God just cause to think himself disgrac'd by us, when we deny him Obedience for fear of a Creature: As though he had but an *Infant ability* too feeble to bear us out in Duty, and incapable to ballance the strength of an Arm of Flesh?

4. 'Tis Contemn'd *by trusting in our selves, in Means, in Man, more than in God.* When in any Distress we will try every Creature-refuge, before we have recourse to God; and when we apply our selves to him, we do it with such slight and perfunctory frames, and with so much despondency, as if we despair'd either of his Ability or Will to help us; and implore him with cooler Affections, than we sollicite Creatures: Or, when in a Disease we depend upon the virtue of the Medicine, the ability of the *Physician*, and reflect not upon that Power that endued the Medicine with that virtue, and supports the quality in it, and concurs to the operation of it. When we depend upon the activity of the Means, as if they power originally in themselves, and not derivatively; and do not eye the Power had of God animating and assisting them. We cannot expect relief from any thing with a neglect of God, but we render it in our thoughts more powerful than God: We acknowledge a greater fulness in a shallow Stream, than in an Eternal Spring; we do in effect depose the True God, and create to our selves a New one; we assert by such a kind of acting, the Creature, if not superior, yet equal with God and independent on him. When we trust in our own strength, without begging his Assistance; or boast of our own strength, without acknowledging his concurrence, as the *Assyrian*; *By the strength of my hand have I done this, I have put down the Inhabitants like a valiant Man, Isai. 10. 13.* 'Tis, as if the *Ax* should boast it self against him that hews therewith, and thinks it self more Mighty than the Arm that wields it, *verse 15.* when we trust in others more than in God. Thus God upbraids those by the *Prophet*, that sought help from *Egypt*, telling them *Isai. 31. 3. The Egyptians were men, and not gods*; intimating, that by their dependance on them, they render'd them gods and not Men, and advanc'd them from the state of Creatures to that of Almighty Deities. 'Tis to set a pile of Dust, a heap of Ashes, above Him that created and preserves the World. To trust in a Creature, is to make it as Infinite as God; to do that which is impossible in it self to be done. God himself cannot make a Creature infinite, for that were to make him God.

'Tis also contemn'd when we ascribe what we receive, to the power of Instruments, and not to the Power of God. Men, in whatsoever they do for us, are but the Tools whereby the Creator works. Is it not a disgrace to the Limner to admire his Pensil, and not himself; to the Artificer, to admire his File and Engines, and not his Power? *'Tis not I, saith Paul, that labour, but the Grace, the efficacious Grace of God which is in me.* Whatsoever good we do is from him, not from our selves; to ascribe it to our selves, or to Instruments, is to overlook and contemn his Power.

5. Unbelief



5. *Unbelief of the Gospel is a contempt and disowning Divine Power.* This Perfection hath been discover'd in the Conception of Christ, the Union of the two Natures, his Resurrection from the Grave, the Restoration of the World, and the Conversion of Men, more than in the Creation of the World: Then what a disgrace is *Unbelief* to all that Power, that so severely punished the *Jews* for the rejecting the *Gospel*; turn'd so many Nations from their beloved Superstitions; humbled the Power of Princes and the Wisdom of Philosophers; chas'd *Devils* from their Temples, by the weakness of Fishermen; planted the Standard of the *Gospel*, against the common Notions and inveterate Customs of the World? What a disgrace is *Unbelief* to this Power, which hath preserved *Christianity* from being extinguish'd by the force of Men and Devils, and kept it flourishing in the midst of *Sword, Fire, and Executioners*; that hath made the *Simplicity* of the *Gospel* overpower the Eloquence of Orators, and multiplied it from the *Alms of Martyrs*, when it was destitute of all Humane Assistances? Not heartily to believe and embrace that Doctrine, which hath been attended with such Marks of Power, is a high reflection upon this Divine Perfection, so highly manifested in the first publication, propagation, and preservation of it.

## II. The Power of God is abused, as well as contemned.

1. *When we make use of it to justify Contradictions.* The Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* is an abuse of this Power. When the Maintainers of it cannot answer the Absurdities alledg'd against it, they have recourse to the Power of God. It implies a Contradiction, that the *same Body* should be on Earth and in Heaven at the same instant of time; that it should be at the Right hand of God, and in the Mouth and Stomack of a Man; that it should be a Body of *Flesh*, and yet *Bread* to the Eye and to the Taste; that it should be Visible and Invisible, a glorious Body and yet gnawn by the Teeth of a Creature; that it should be multiplied in a Thousand places, and yet an entire Body in every one, where there is no Member to be seen, no *Flesh* to be tasted; that it should be above us in the highest Heavens, and yet within us in our lower Bowels: Such Contradictions as these are an Abuse of the Power of God.

Again, We abuse this Power when we believe every idle Story that is reported, because God is able to make it so, if he pleased. We may as well believe *Esop's Fables* to be true, that Birds spake and Beasts reasoned, because the Power of God can enable such Creatures to such acts. Gods Power is not the Rule of our Belief of a thing without the exercise of it in matter of Fact, and the declaration of it upon sufficient Evidence.

2. The Power of God is abus'd, by presuming on it, without using the Means he hath appointed. When Men sit with folded Arms, and make a Confidence in his Power, a glorious Title to their *Idleness* and *Disobedience*; they would have his Strength do all, and his Precept should move them to do nothing; this is a trust of his Power against his Command, a pretended glorifying his Power with a slight of his Sovereignty. Though God be Almighty, yet for the most part he exerciseth his Might in giving life and success to Second Causes and lawful endeavours. When we stay in the mouth of Danger, without any Call ordering us to continue, and against a Door of Providence open'd for our rescue, and sanctuary ourselves in the Power of God without any Promise, without any Providence conducting us; this is not to glorify the Divine Might, but to neglect it, in neglecting the Means which his Power affords to us for our escape. \* To condemn it to our humors; to work Miracles for us according to our wills, and against his own. † John 11. 53. 54.



A rash running upon Danger, though for the Truth it self, is a presuming upon, and consequently an abuse of this Power; a proud challenging it to serve our turns against the Authority of his Will, and the force of his Precept: A not resting in his Ordinate Power, but demanding his Absolute Power to pleasure our Follies and Presumptions; concluding and expecting more from it than what is Authoriz'd by his Will.

9. Instruction. If Infinite Power be a peculiar Property of God; *How miserable will all wicked Rebels be under this Power of God?* Men may break his Laws, but not impair his Arm; they may slight his Word, but cannot resist his Power. If he swear that he will sweep a place with the Besom of Destruction, *As he hath thought, so shall it come to pass; and as he hath purposed, so shall it stand, Isai. 14. 23, 24.* Rebels against an Earthly Prince may exceed him in strength, and be more powerful than their Sovereign: None can equal God, much less exceed him. As none can exercise an act of Hostility against him without his permissive Will; so none can struggle from under his hand without his positive Will. He hath an Arm not to be moved, a Hand not to be wrung aside. God is represented on his Throne like a *Jasper Stone, Revel. 4. 3.* as one of Invincible Power when he comes to Judge; the *Jasper* is a Stone which withstands the greatest force\*. Though Men resist the Order of his Laws, they cannot resist the Sentence of their punishment, nor the Execution of it. None can any more exempt themselves from the Arm of his Strength, than they can from the Authority of his Dominion. As they must bow to his Sovereignty; so they must sink under his Force. A Prisoner in this World may make his Escape; but a Prisoner in the World to come cannot; *Job 10. 7. There is none that can deliver out of thine hand. There is none to deliver when he tears in pieces, Psal. 50. 22.* His Strength is uncontrollable; hence his *Throne* is represented as a *Fiery flame, Dan. 7. 9.* As a spark of Fire hath power to kindle one thing after another, and increase till it consumes a Forrest, a City, swallow up all combustible Matter till it consumes a World, and many Worlds, if they were in Being. What power hath a Tree to resist the Fire, though it seems mighty when it outbraves the Winds? What Man to this day hath been able to free himself from that Chain of *Death*, God clapt upon him for his Revolt? And if he be too feeble to rescue himself from a Temporal, much less from an Eternal Death. The *Devils* have to this minute groaned under the Pile of Wrath, without any success in delivering themselves by all their strength, which much surmounts all the strength of Mankind, nor have they any hopes to work their rescue to Eternity.

How foolish is every Sinner? Can we poor Worms strut it out against Infinite Power? We cannot resist the meanest Creatures when God Commitions them, and puts a Sword into their hands. They will not, no not the *Worms*, be startled at the glory of a King, when they have their Creators Warrant to be his Executioners†. Who can withstand him, when he commands the Waves and Inundations of the Sea to leap over the Shore; when he divides the Ground in Earthquakes, and makes it gape wide to swallow the Inhabitants of it; when the Air is corrupted to breed Pestilences; when Storms and Showers, unseasonably falling, putrifie the Fruits of the Earth; what Created Power can mend the matter, and with a prevailing Voice say to him, What dost thou?

There are two Attributes God will make glister in Heil to the full, his *Wrath* and his *Power*; Rom. 9. 22. *What if God willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much Longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction?* If it were meer Wrath, and no Power to second it, it were not so terrible; but 'tis *Wrath* and *Power*, both are joyn'd together: 'Tis not only a sharp Sword, but a powerful Arm; and not only that, for then it were well for the damned Creature. To have many sharp blows, and from a strong Arm; this may be without putting forth the highest strength a Man hath: But in this God makes it his design to make his Power known and conspicuous; He takes the Sword (as it were) in both hands, that he may shew the strength of his Arm in striking the harder blow; and therefore the *Apostle* calls it 2 *Thess. 1. 9. the Glory of his Power*, which puts a Sting into this Wrath; and it is called *Revel. 19. 15. the fierceness of the wrath of the Almighty.* God will do it in such a manner, as to make Men sen-

\* Gronov. loc.

† Acts 12. 23.



fible of his Almightyness in every stroke. How great must that Vengeance be, that is backed by all the Strength of God? When there will be a powerful Wrath without a powerful Compassion; when all his Power shall be exercised in Punishing, and not the least mite of it exercis'd in Pitying; how irresistible will be the load of such a weighty Hand? How can the *dust of the Ballance* break the mighty Bars, or get out of the Lists of a powerful Vengeance, or hope for any grain of Comfort? Oh, that every obstinate Sinner would think of this, and consider his unmeasurable boldness in thinking himself able to grapple with *Omnipotence*! What force can any have to resist the presence of him, before whom Rocks melt, and the Heavens at length shall be shrivell'd up as a Parchment by the last Fire? As the Light of Gods face is too dazeling to be beheld by us; so the Arm of his Power is too Mighty to be opposed by us. His Almightyness is above the reach of our Pot-sheard strength, as his Infinity is above the capacity of our Purblind Understandings. God were not Omnipotent, if his Power could be rendred ineffectual by any.

A *Second Use* of this Point from the Consideration of the Infinite Power of Use II. God, is of *Comfort*. As Omnipotence is an Ocean that cannot be fathom'd; so *Comfort*. the Comforts from it are streams that cannot be exhausted. What Joy can be wanting to him that finds himself folded in the Arms of *Omnipotence*?

This Perfection is made over to Believers in the Covenant, as well as any other Attribute; *I am the Lord your God*; therefore that *Power*, which is as essential to the Godhead as any other Perfection of his Nature, is in the rights and extent of it assured unto you. Nay, may we not say, It is made over more than any other, because it is that which animates every other Perfection, and is the Spirit that gives them Motion and Appearance in the World? If God had exprest himself in particular, as, *I am a True God, a Wise God, a Loving God, a Righteous God, I am yours*; what would all or any of those have signified, unless the other also had been implied, as, *I am an Almighty God, I am your God*? In Gods making over himself in any particular Attribute, this of his *Power* is included in every one, without which all his other Grants would be insignificant. 'Tis a Comfort that Power is in the hand of God; it can never be better placed, for he can never use his Power to injure his confiding Creature: If it were in our own hands, we might use it to injure our selves. 'Tis a Power in the hand of an indulgent Father, not a hard-hearted Tyrant: 'Tis a just Power, *His right hand is full of Righteousness, Psal. 48. 10.* because of his Righteousness he can never use it ill, and because of his Wisdom he can never use it unreasonably. Men that have strength, often misplace the actings of it, because of their Folly; and sometimes employ it to base ends, because of their Wickedness: But this Power in God is alway awakned by *Goodness* and conducted by *Wisdom*; 'tis never exercis'd by Self-will and Passion, but according to the Immutable Rule of his own Nature, which is *Righteousness*. How Comfortable is it to think, that you have a God that can do what he pleases; nothing so difficult but he can effect, nothing so strong but he can over-rule? You need not dread Men, since you have One to restrain them; nor fear Devils, since you have One to chain them: No Creature but is acted by this Power; no Creature but must fall upon the withdrawing of this Power. It was not all laid out in Creation: 'Tis not weakned by his Preservation of things; he yet hath a fulness of Power, and a residue of Spirit: For whom should that Eternal *Arm of the Lord* be displayed, and that Incomprehensible *Thunder of his Power* be shot out, but for those for whose sake and for whose *Comfort* it is revealed in his Word?

In Particular,

1. Here is *Comfort in all Afflictions and Distresses*. Our Evils can never be so great to oppress us, as his Power is great to deliver us. The same Power that brought a World out of a *Chaos*, and constituted, and hath hitherto preserved the regular Motion of the Stars, can bring Order out of our Confusions, and Light out of our Darkness. When our Saviour was in the greatest distress, and beheld the face of his Father frowning, while he was upon the *Cross*, in his Complaint to him he exerciseth Faith upon his Power, *Mat. 27. 46. Eli, Eli; My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*; that is, *My strong, my strong*; *El*, is a Name of Power belonging



belonging to God: He comforts himself in his Power, while he complains of his Frowns. Follow his Pattern, and forget not that Power that can scatter the Clouds, as well as gather them together. The *Psalms* support in his Distress was in the Creative Power of God, *Psal.* 121. 2. *My help comes from the Lord which made Heaven and Earth.*

2. 'Tis Comfort in all strong and stirring Corruptions and mighty Temptations. 'Tis by this we may arm our selves, and be strong in the power of his might, *Ephes.* 6. 10. By this we may conquer Principalities and Powers as dreadful as Hell, but not so mighty as Heaven. By this we may triumph over Lusts within, too strong for an Arm of Flesh. By this the *Devils* that have possessed us may be cast out; the batter'd Walls of our Souls may be repaired, and the Sons of *Anak* laid flat. That Power that brought Light out of Darkness, and overmaster'd the deformity of the *Chaos*, and set bounds to the Ocean, and dried up the *Red Sea* by a Rebuke; can quell the Tumults in our Spirits, and level Spiritual *Goliaths* by his Word. When the *Disciples* heard that terrifying Speech of our Saviour, concerning *Rich men*, that it was easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a Needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God, *Mat.* 19. 24. to entertain the Gospel, which commanded Self-denial; and that, because of the Allurements of the World, and the strong Habits in their Soul; Christ refers them to the Power of God, *verse* 26. who could expel those ill Habits, and plant good ones; *With Men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.* There is no resistance, but he can surmount; no strong hold, but he can demolish; no Tower, but he can level.

3. 'Tis Comfort from hence, that all Promises shall be performed. Goodness is sufficient to make a Promise, but Power is necessary to perform a Promise. Men that are honest, cannot often make good their words, because something may intervene that may shorten their Ability; but nothing can disable God, without diminishing his Godhead. He hath an Infiniteness of Power to accomplish his Word, as well as an Infiniteness of Goodness to make and utter his Word. That *Might* whereby he made Heaven and Earth, and his keeping Truth for ever, are joyn'd together, *Psal.* 146. 5, 6. His Fathers Faithfulness, and His Creative Power are link'd together. 'Tis upon this Basis the Covenant, and every part of it, is established, and stands as firm as the *Almightiness* of God, whereby he sprung up the Earth, and rear'd the Heavens. No power can resist his will, *Rom.* 9. 19. *Who can disannul his purpose, and turn back his hand when it is stretched out?* *Isai.* 14. 27. His Word is unalterable, and his Power is invincible. He could not deceive himself, for he knew his own strength when he promised: No unexpected event can change his Resolution, because nothing can happen without the compass of his Foresight. No Created Strength can stop him in his Action, because all Creatures are ready to serve him at his Command; not the Devils in Hell, nor all the Wicked men on Earth, since he hath strength to restrain them, and an Arm to punish them. What can be too hard for him that created Heaven and Earth? Hence it was, that when God Promised any thing anciently to his People, he used often the Name of the *Almighty*, the *Lord that created Heaven and Earth*, as that which was an undeniable Answer to any Objection, against any thing that might be made against the greatness and stupendiousness of any Promise; by that Name in all his Works of Grace was he known to them, *Exod.* 6. 3. When we are sure of his Will, we need not question his Strength, since he never over-engageth himself above his Ability. He that could not be resisted by nothing in Creation, nor vanquish'd by *Devils* in Redemption, can never want Power to glorifie his Faithfulness in his Accomplishment of whatsoever he hath promised.

4. From this Infiniteness of Power in God we have ground of Assurance for Perseverance. Since Conversion is resembled to the Works of Creation and Resurrection, two great Marks of his Strength, he doth not surely employ himself in the first work of Changing the Heart, to let any Created strength battle that Power which he began and intends to glorifie. It was this *Might* that struck off the Chain, and expell'd that strong one that possessed you. What if you are too weak to keep him out of his lost possession, will God lose the glory of his first strength, by suffering his foiled Adversary to make



make a re-entry, and regain his former usurpation? His Outstretched Arm will not do less by his Spiritual, than it did by his National *Israel*: It guarded them all the way to *Canaan*, and left them not to shift for themselves, after he had struck off the Fetters of *Egypt*, and buried their Enemies in the *Red Sea*, *Deut. 1. 31.* This Greatness of the *Father* above all, our Saviour makes the ground of Believers continuance for ever, against the blasts of Hell and engines of the World, *John 10. 29. My Father is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Fathers hands.* Our keeping is not in our own weak hands, but in the hands of him who is mighty to save. That Power of God keeps us which intends our salvation. In all fears of falling away, shelter your selves in the Power of God: *He shall be holden up*, saith the *Apostle*, speaking concerning one weak in Faith; and no other Reason is rendred by him but this, *for God is able to make him to stand*, *Rom. 14. 4.*

5. From this Attribute of the Infinite Power of God, we have a ground of comfort in the lowest estate of the Church. Let the state of the Church be never so deplorable, the condition never so desperate, that Power that created the World, and shall raise the Bodies of men, can create a happy state for the Church, and raise her from an overwhelming Grave: Though the Enemies trample upon her, they cannot upon the Arm that holds her, which by the least motion of it, can lift her up above the heads of her Adversaries, and make them feel the thunder of that Power that none can understand: By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils they are consumed, *Job 4. 9. they shall be scattered as Chaff before the wind*: If once he draw his hand off of his bosom, all must fly before him, or sink under him\*: And when there is none to help, his own Arm sustains him, *Psal. 74. 11.* and brings salvation†, and his fury doth uphold him. What if the Church totter under the underminings of Hell? What if it hath a sad heart and wet eyes? In what a little moment can he make the night turn into day, and make the Jews that were preparing for death in *Shushan*, triumph over the necks of their Enemies, and march in one hour with Swords in their hands, that expected the last hour ropes about their necks? *Ezra. 9. 1. 5.* If *Israel* be pursued by *Pharaoh*, the Sea shall open its arms to protect them: If they be thirsty, a Rock shall spout out Water to refresh them: If they be hungry, Heaven shall be their Granary for Manna: If *Jerusalem* be besieged, and hath not Force enough to encounter *Senacherib*, an Angel shall turn the Camp into an *Aeldem*, a Field of Blood. His People shall not want deliverances, till God want a power of working Miracles for their security: He is more jealous of his Power, than the Church can be of her Safety. And if we should want other Arguments to press him, we may implore him by virtue of his Power: For when there is nothing in the Church as a Motive to him to save it, there is enough in his own Name, and the illustration of his Power, *Psal. 106. 8.* Who can grapple with the Omnipotency of that God, who is jealous of, and zealous for the honour of it? And therefore God, for the most part, takes such opportunities to deliver, wherein his Almightyness may be most conspicuous, and his Counsels most admirable. He awakened not himself to deliver *Israel*, till they were upon the brink of the *Red Sea*; nor to rescue the three Children, till they were in the fiery Furnace; nor *Daniel*, till he was in the *Lions Den*. 'Tis in the weakness of his Creature that his strength is perfected; not in a way of addition of perfectness to it, but in a way of manifestation of the perfection of it. As it is the perfection of the Sun to shine and enlighten the World, not that the Sun receives an increase of light by the darting of his Beams, but discovers his Glory to the admiration of Men, and pleasure of the World. If it were not for such occasions, the World would not regard the Mightiness of God, nor know what Power were in him. It traverses the Stage in its fulness and liveliness upon such occasions, when the Enemies are strong, and their strength edged with an intense hatred, and but little time between the contrivance and execution. 'Tis a great comfort that the lowest Distresses of the Church are a fit Scene for the discovery of this Attribute, and that the Glory of God's Omnipotence, and the Churches Security, are so straitly link'd together. 'Tis a promise that will never be forgotten by God, and ought never to be forgotten by us, that in this Mountain, the hand of the Lord shall rest; that is, the Power of the Lord shall abide; and Moab shall be trodden under him



him, even as Straw is trodden down for the Dung-hill. And the Plagues of Babylon shall come in one day, death and mourning and famine: for strong is the Lord who judges her, Rev. 18.8.

Use III.

The Third Use is for Exhortation.

1. Meditate on this Power of God, and press it often upon your Minds. We conclude many things of God that we do not practically suck the comfort of, for want of deep thoughts of it, and frequent inspection into it. We believe God to be true, yet distrust him; we acknowledge him powerful, yet fear the motion of every straw. Many Truths, though assented to in our Understandings, are kept under hatches by corrupt Affections, and have not their due influence, because they are not brought forth into the open air of our Souls by meditation. If we will but search our hearts; we shall find it is the Power of God we often doubt of. When the heart of *Abaz* and his Subjects trembled at the Combination of the *Syrian* and *Israelitish* Kings against him, for want of a confidence in the Power of God, God sends his *Prophet* with Commission to work a miraculous sign at his own choice, to rear up his fainting heart; and when he refus'd to ask a sign out of diffidence of that Almighty Power, the *Prophet* complains of it as an affront to his Master\*. *Moses* so great a Friend of God, was overtaken with this kind of unbelief, after all the Experiments of God's miraculous Acts in *Egypt*; the Answer God gives him, manifests this to be at the Core: *Is the Lord's hand waxed short?* Numb. 11.23.

For want of actuated thoughts of this, we are many times turned from our known duty by the blast of a Creature; as though man had more power to dismay us, than God hath to support us in his commanded way. The belief of God's Power is one of the first steps to all Religion; without settled thoughts of it, we cannot pray lively and believably, for the obtaining the Mercies we want, or the averting the Evils we fear; we should not love him, unless we are persuaded he hath a Power to bless us; nor fear him, unless we were persuaded of his Power to punish us. The frequent thoughts of this would render our Faith more stable, and our Hopes more steadfast; it would make us more feeble to sin, and more careful to obey. When the *Virgin* stagger'd at the Message of the *Angel*, that she should bear a Son, he in his Answer turns her to the Creative power of God, *Luke* 1.35. *The Power of the highest shall overshadow thee.* Which seems to be in allusion to the Spirits moving upon the face of the Deep, and bringing a comely World out of a confus'd Mass. Is it harder for God to make a Virgin conceive a Son by the power of his Spirit, than to make a World? Why doth he reveal himself so often under the title of *Almighty*, and press it upon us, but that we should press it upon our selves? And shall we be forgetful of that, which every thing about us, every thing within us is a mark of? How come we by a power of seeing and hearing, a faculty and act of understanding and will, but by this Power framing us, this Power assisting us? What though the Thunder of his Power cannot be understood, no more can any other Perfection of his Nature; shall we therefore seldom think of it? The Sea cannot be fathom'd, yet the Merchant excuseth not himself from sailing upon the Surface of it. We cannot glorifie God, without due consideration of this Attribute; for his Power is his Glory as much as any other, and called both by the Name of *Glory*, *Rom.* 6.4. speaking of Christ's Resurrection by the Glory of the Father; and also the riches of his Glory, *Eph.* 3.16. Those that have strong Temptations in their course and over-pressing Corruptions in their hearts, have need to think of it out of Interest, since nothing but this can relieve them. Those that have experimented the working of it in their new Creation, are oblig'd to think of it out of gratitude. It was this mighty Power over himself that gave rise to all that pardoning Grace already conferred, or hereafter expected; without it our Souls had been consum'd, the World overturned; we could not have expected a happy Heaven, but have layen yelling in an eternal Hell; had not the Power of his Mercy exceeded that of his Justice, and his Infinite Power executed what his Infinite Wisdom had contrived for our Redemption. How much also should we be rais'd in our admirations of God, and ravish our selves in contemplating that Might that can raise innumerable Worlds in those Infinite imaginary Spaces without this Globe of Heaven and Earth, and exceed unconceivably what he hath done in the Creation of this?

2. From



2. From the pressing the consideration of this upon our selves, *Let us be induc'd to trust God upon the account of his Power.* The main end of the revelation of his Power to the *Patriarchs*, and of the miraculous Operations of it in *Egypt*, was to induce them to an intire reposing themselves in God: And the *Psalmist* doth scarce speak of the Divine Omnipotence without making this Inference from it; and scarce exhorts to a trust in God, but backs it with a Consideration of his Power in Creation, it being the chief support of the Soul, *Psal. 146. 1. Happy is he whose hope is in the Lord his God, which made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that therein is.* That Power is invincible that drew the World out of nothing: Nothing can happen to us harder than the making the World without the concurrence of Instruments: No difficulty can nonplus that strength, that hath drawn all things out of nothing, or out of a confus'd Matter next to nothing: No Power can rife what we commit to him, *2 Tim. 1. 12.* He is all Power, above the reach of all Power; all other Powers in the World flowing from him, or depending on him. He is worthy to be trusted, since we know him true, without ever breaking his word, and Omnipotent, never failing of his purpose; and a confidence in it is the chief act whereby we can glorifie this Power, and credit his Arm. A strong God, and a weak Faith in Omnipotence, do not sute well together. Indeed we are more engaged to a trust in Divine Power than the Ancient *Patriarchs* were: They had the Verbal Declaration of his Power, and many of them little other Evidence of it, than in the Creation of the World; and their Faith in God being establish'd in this first discovery of his Omnipotence, drew out it self further to believe, That whatsoever God promised by his Word, he was able to perform, as well as the Creation of the *World out of nothing*; which seems to be the intendment of the *Apostle*, *Hebr. 11. 3.* Not barely to speak of the Creation of the World by God, which was a thing the *Hebrews* understood well enough from their Ancient Oracles; but to shew the Foundation of the *Patriarchs* Faith, *viz. God making the World by his Word*, and what use they made of the Discovery of his Power in that, to lead them to believe the Promise of God concerning the *Seed of the Woman* to be brought into the World. But we have not only the same Foundation, but superadded Demonstrations of this Attribute in the Conception of our Saviour, the Union of the two Natures, the glorious Redemption, the Propagation of the Gospel, and the new Creation of the World. They relied upon the naked Power of God, without those more illustrious Appearances of it, which have been in the Ages since, and arriv'd to their notice: We have the wonderful Effects of that which they had but obscure Expectations of,

1. Consider, *Trust in God can never be without taking in God's Power as a concurrent Foundation with his Truth.* 'Tis the main ground of Trust, and so set forth in the Prophet, *Isa. 26. 4. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.* And the Faith of the Ancients so recommended *Hebr. 11.* had this chiefly for its ground; and the Faith in Gospel-times is called a *Trusting on his Arm*, *Isa. 51. 5.* All the Attributes of God are the Objects of our Veneration, but they do not equally contribute to the producing Trust in our hearts; his Eternity, Simplicity, Infiniteness, ravish and astonish our Minds when we consider them: But there is no immediate tendency in their Nature to allure us to a confidence in him, no not in an innocent State; much less in a laps'd and revolted Condition: But the other Perfections of his Nature, as his Holiness, Righteousness, Mercy, are amiable to us in regard of the immediate Operations of them upon and about the Creature, and so have something in their own Nature to allure us to repose our selves in him: But yet those cannot engage to an intire trust in him, without reflecting upon his Ability, which can only render those useful and successful to the Creature. For whatsoever bars stand in the way of his holy, righteous, and merciful proceedings towards his Creatures, are not overmaster'd by those Perfections, but by that Strength of his which can only relieve us in concurrence with the other Attributes. How could his Mercy succour us without his Arm, or his Wisdom guide us without his Hand, or his Truth perform Promises

*Amyrant. Mis-  
r. l. Tom. 5.  
p. 170.*



ses to us without his strength? As no Attribute can act without it, so in our addresses to him upon the account of any particular Perfection in the Godhead according to our indigency, one eye must be perpetually fixed upon this of his Power; and our Faith would be feeble and dispirited without eying this: Without this, his *Holiness*, which hates sin, would not be regarded; and his *Mercy*, pitying a grieving sinner, would not be valued. As this Power is the ground of a wicked man's fear, so it is the ground of a good man's trust. This was that which was the principal support of *Abraham*, not barely his promise, but his *ability to make it good*, Rom. 4. 21. And when he was commanded to sacrifice *Isaac*, the *ability of God to raise him up again*, Heb. 11. 19. All Faith would droop, and be in the mire, without leaning upon this. All those Attributes which we consider as Moral in God, would have no influence upon us, without this, which we consider Physically in God. Though we value the kindness men may express to us in our Distresses, yet we make them not the Objects of our Confidence, unless they have an ability to act what they express. There can be no trust in God without an eye to his Power.

2. *Sometimes the Power of God is the sole Object of trust.* As when we have no promise to assure us of his Will, we have nothing else to pitch upon but his Ability; and that not his absolute Power, but his ordinate, in the way of his Providence; we must not trust in it so, as to expect he should please our humour with fresh Miracles, but rest upon his Power, and leave the manner to his Will. *Alas*, when ready to Conflict with the vast *Ethiopian Army*, pleaded nothing else but this *Power of God*†. And the *three Children*, who had no particular promise of deliverance (that we read of) stuck to God's Ability to preserve them against the Kings threatening, and own'd it in the face of the King, yet with some kind of inward intimations in their own Spirits that he would also deliver them; *Dan. 3. 17. Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace.* And accordingly the fire burnt the Cords that tied them, without singeing any thing else about them. But when this Power hath been exercis'd upon like occasions, 'tis a President he hath given us to rest upon. Presidents in Law are good pleas, and strong encouragements to the Clyent to expect success in his Sute. *Our Fathers trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them*, saith *David*, *Psal. 22. 4.* And *Jehoshaphat* in a case of distress, *2 Chron. 20. 7. Art not thou our God, that didst drive out the Inhabitants of this Land before thy People Israel?* When we have not any Statute Law and Promise to plead, we may plead his Power, together with the former Presidents and Acts of it. The *Centurion* had nothing else to act his Faith upon, but the Power of *Christ*, and some Evidences of it in the Miracles reported of him; but he is silent in the latter, and casts himself only upon the former, acknowledging that

† *Mar. 16. 17. Christ had the same command over Diseases, as himself had over his Souldiers* ||. And our Saviour when he receives the Petition of the blind men, requires no more of them in order to a Cure, but a belief of his Ability to perform it; *Matt. 9. 28. Believe you that I am able to do this?* His Will is not known but by Revelation, but his Power is apprehended by Reason, as essentially and eternally linkt with the Notion of a God. God also is jealous of the Honour of this Attribute; and since it is so much virtually discredited, he is pleas'd when any do cordially own it, and intirely resign themselves to the assistance of it.

Well then, in all Duties where Faith is particularly to be acted, forget not this as the main prop of it: Do you pray for a flourishing and triumphing Grace? Consider him *as able to make all Grace to abound in you*, *2 Cor. 9. 8.* Do you want comfort and reviving under your Contritions and godly Sorrow? Consider him as he declares himself, *The high and lofty One*, *Isa. 57. 15.* Are you under pressing distresses? Take *Eliphaz* his advice to *Job*, when he tells him what he himself would do if he were in his case; *Job 5. 8. I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:* But observe under what consideration, *Vers. 9. as to one that doth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number.* When you beg of him the melting your rocky hearts, the dashing in pieces your strong Corruptions, the drawing his beautiful Image in your Soul, the quickning your dead hearts, and reviving your drooping Spirits, and supplying your Spiritual wants, consider him as one *able to do abundantly*, not only *above what you can ask*, but *above what you can think*, *Eph. 3. 20.* Faith will be spiritless, and Prayer will be liveless, if Power be not eyed



eyed by us in those things which cannot be done without an Arm of Omnipotence.

3. This Doctrine teacheth us *Humility and Submission*. The vast disproportion between the mightiness of God, and the meanness of a Creature, inculcates the Lesson of Humility in his Presence: How becoming is Humility *under a mighty hand*? 1 *Pet.* 5. 6. What is an Infant in a Giants hand, or a Lamb in a Lions paw? Submission to irresistible Power is the best policy, and the best security: This gratifies and draws out Goodness, whereas murmuring and resistance exasperates and sharpens Power. We sanctifie his Name, and glorifie his strength by falling down before it; 'Tis an acknowledgment of his invisible strength, and our inability to match it. How low should we therefore lye before him, against whose Power our Pride and Murmuring can do no good, who can out-wrestle us in our Contests, and alway overcome when he judges? *Rom.* 3. 4.

4. This Doctrine teacheth us *not to fear the pride and force of man*. How unreasonable is it to fear a limited above an unbounded Power? How unbecoming is the fear of man in him, who hath an interest in a Strength able to curb the strongest Devils? Who would tremble at the threats of a Dwarf, that hath a mighty and watchful Giant for his Guard? If God doth but arise, his enemies are scattered, *Psal.* 68. 1. the least motion makes them fly before him: 'Tis no difficult thing for him, that made them by a word, to unmake their designs, and shiver them in pieces by the breath of his mouth: He brings Princes to nothing, and makes the Judges of the Earth vanity; they wither when he blows upon them, and their stock shall not take root in the Earth. He can command a Whirlwind to take them away as stubble, *Isa.* 40. 23, 24. yea, with the shaking of his hand he makes Servants to become Rulers of those that were their Masters, *Zach.* 2. 9. Whole Nations are no more in his hands than a morning Cloud, or the dew upon the ground, or the chaff before the wind, or the smock against the motion of the Air, which though it appear out of a Chimney like a black invincible Cloud, is quickly disperst, and becomes invisible \*. How inconsiderable are the most Mighty to this Strength, which can puff away a whole World of proud Grasshoppers, and a whole Sky of daring Clouds? He that by his word masters the rage of the Sea, can over-rule the Pride and Power of Men. Where is the Fury of the Oppressor? It cannot overleap the Bounds he hath set it, nor march an inch beyond the point he hath prescrib'd it. Fear not the confederacies of man, but sanctifie the Lord of Hosts, let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, *Isa.* 8. 13. To fear men is to dishonour the Name of God, and regard him as a feeble Lord, and not as the Lord of Hosts, who is mighty in strength, so that they that harden themselves against him shall not prosper.

5. Therefore this Doctrine teacheth us *the fear of God*. The Prophet *Jeremiah* counts it as an impossible thing for men to be destitute of the fear of God, when they seriously consider his Name to be great and mighty. *Jer.* 10. 6, 7. Thou art great, and thy Name is great in might; who would not fear thee, O thou King of Nations? Shall we not tremble at his Presence, who hath placed the Sand for the bound of the Sea by a perpetual decree; that though the Waves thereof toss themselves, yet they cannot prevail, *Jer.* 5. 22. He can Arm the weakest Creature for our destruction, and disarm the strongest Creatures which appear for our preservation. He can command a hair, a crumb, a kernel to go awry, and strangle us. He can make the Heavens brass over our head, stop close the Bottels of the Clouds, and make the fruit of the Fields droop, when there is a small distance to the Harvest; he can arm mens wit, wealth, hands against themselves: He can turn our sweet morsels into bitter, and our own Consciences into devouring Lions: He can root up Cities by Moles, and conquer the proudest by Lice and Worms. The Omnipotence of God is not only the Object of a Believer's trust, but a Believer's fear. 'Tis from the consideration of this Power only, that our Saviour presses his Disciples, whom he intitles his Friends, to fear God; which Lesson he presses by a double repetition, and with a kind of Asseveration, without rendring any other Reason than this of the ability of God to cast into Hell, *Luke* 12. 5. We are to fear him because he can; but bless his goodness because he will not. In regard of his Omnipotence, he is to be reverenc'd, not only by mortal Men, but by the blessed Angels, who are past the fear of any danger by his Power, being confirm'd in a



happy state by his unalterable Grace : When they adore him for his holiness, they reverence him for his Power with covered Faces : The Title of the *Lord of Hosts* is joynd in their reverential praise with that of his Holiness, *I/a. 6. 3. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.* How should we adore that Power which can preserve us, when Devils and Men conspire to destroy us ? How should we stand in awe of that Power which can destroy us, though Angels and Men should combine to preserve us ? The parts of his ways which are discovered, are sufficient Motives to an humble and reverential Adoration : But who can fear and adore him according to the vastness of his Power, and his excellent Greatness, since the *Thunder of his Power who can understand?*



A  
DISCOURSE  
UPON THE  
Holiness of God.

Exodus 15. 11.

*Who is like unto thee, Ob Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in Holness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*

**T**His Verse is one of the loftiest descriptions of the Majesty and Excellency of God in the whole Scripture\*. 'Tis a part of *Moses's* \* *Trap. in loc.*  
'*Emulous*, or *Triumphant Song*, after a great and real, and a Typical Victory; in the womb of which all the Deliverances of the Church were couch'd. 'Tis the first Song upon Holy Record, and it consists of Gratulatory and Prophetick matter: It casts a look backward, to what God did for them in their Deliverance from *Egypt*; and a look forward, to what God shall do for the Church in future Ages. That Deliverance was but a rough draught of something more excellent to be wrought towards the closing up of the World; when his Plagues shall be poured out upon the *Antichristian* Powers, which should revive the same Song of *Moses* in the Church, as fitted so many Ages before for such a Scene of Affairs†. 'Tis observ'd therefore, that many words in this Song † *Rev. 15. 2, 3.*  
are put in the *Future Tense*, noting a Time to come; and the very first word, *ver. 1.* *Then sang Moses and the Children of Israel this Song: יְשִׁירְנוּ shall sing*; implying, that it was compos'd and calculated for the celebrating some greater Action of Gods, which was to be wrought in the World||. Upon this account some of the || *Manass. ben Israels de Rejur. lib. 1. cap. 1. p. 7.*  
*Jewish Rabbins*, from the consideration of this Remark, asserted the Doctrine of the *Resurrection* to be meant in this place; That *Moses* and those *Israelites* should rise again to sing the same Song, for some greater Miracles God should work, and greater Triumphs he should bring forth, exceeding those Wonders at their Deliverance from *Egypt*.

\* It consists of, 1. *A Preface*, *vers. 1. I will sing unto the Lord.*

\* *Pareus in Exod. 15.*

2. *An Historical narration of matter of fact*, *vers. 3, 4. Pharaohs Chariots and his Host hath he cast into the Red Sea*; which he solely ascribes to God, *v. 6. Thy right hand, oh Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, oh Lord, hath dash't in pieces the Enemy*; which he doth Prophetically, as respecting something to be done in After times; or further, for the compleating of that Deliverance; or as Others think, respecting their entring into *Canaan*; for the words in these two Verses are put in the *Future Tense*. The manner of the Deliverance is described *verse 8. The Floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congeal'd in the heart*.



*heart of the Sea.* In the 9th Verse, he magnifies the Victory from the Vain-glory and security of the Enemy; *The Enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, &c.* And Verse 16, 17. he Prophetically describes the fruit of this Victory, in the influence it shall have upon those Nations, by whose Confines they were to Travel to the Promised Land; *Fear and dread shall fall upon them: By the greatness of thy Arm they shall be as still as a stone, till thy People pass over which thou hast purchased.* The phrase of this, and the 17th and 18th Verses, seems to be more magnificent, than to design only the bringing the Israelites to the Earthly *Canaan*; but seems to respect the gathering his Redeemed Ones together, to place them in the Spiritual Sanctuary which he had established, wherein the Lord should Reign for ever and ever, without any Enemies to disturb his Royalty; *The Lord shall reign for ever and ever, v. 18.* The Prophet, in the midst of his Historical Narrative, seems to be in an extasie, and breaks out in a stately exaltation of God in the Text.

*Who is like unto thee, oh Lord, among the gods, &c.]* Interrogations are in Scripture the strongest Affirmations or Negations: 'Tis here a strong affirmation of the Incomparableness of God, and a strong denial of the worthiness of all Creatures to be partners with him in the degrees of his Excellency: 'Tis a preference of God before all Creatures in *Holiness*, to which the purity of Creatures is but a shadow; in desert of Reverence and Veneration, he being *Fearful in praises.* The Angels cover their Faces when they adore him in his particular Perfections.

† River.

*Amongst the gods.]* Among the *Idols* of the Nations, say some; Others say\*, 'Tis not to be found that the *Heathen Idols* are ever dignified with the Title of *Strong* or *Mighty*, as the word translated *Gods*, doth import; and therefore understand it of the Angels, or other Potentates of the World; or rather inclusively, of all that are noted for, and can lay claim to the Title of *Strength* and *Might* upon the Earth or in Heaven. God is so great and Majestick, that no Creature can share with him in his Praise.

† Calvin.

[Munster.

*Fearful in praises.]* Various are the Interpretations of this passage: To be *reverenc'd in praises*; his Praise ought to be celebrated with a Religious Fear. Fear is the product of his Mercy as well as his Justice; *He hath forgiveness that he may be feared, Psal. 130. 4.* Or, *Fearful in praises*; whom none can praise without Amazement at the considerations of his works. † None can truly praise him without being affected with Astonishment at his Greatness. Or, *Fearful in praises*; || whom no Mortal can sufficiently praise, since he is above all Praise. Whatsoever a Human Tongue can speak, or an Angelical Understanding think of the Excellency of his Nature and the Greatness of his Works, falls short of the vastness of the Divine Perfection. A Creatures Praises of God are as much below the transcendent Eminency of God, as the meaness of a Creatures Being is below the Eternal Fulness of the Creator. Or rather, *Fearful*, or *Terrible, in praises*; that is, in the Matter of thy Praise: And the Learned *Rivet* concurs with me in this sense. The Works of God celebrated in this *Song* were Terrible: It was the Miraculous overthrow of the Strength and Flower of a Mighty Nation: His Judgments were severe, as well as his Mercy was seasonable. The word *נִרְאָה* signifies *Glorious* and *Illustrious*, as well as *Terrible* and *Fearful*. No Man can hear the Praise of thy Name, for those great Judicial Acts, without some Astonishment at thy Justice, the stream, and thy *Holiness* the Spring of those Mighty Works. This seems to be the sense of the following words, *Doing wonders*: *Fearful* in the Matter of thy Praise, they being Wonders which thou hast done among us and for us.

*Doing wonders.]* Congealing the Waters by a Wind, to make them stand like Walls for the rescue of the *Israelites*; and melting them by a Wind, for the overthrow of the *Egyptians*, are Prodigies that challenge the greatest Adorations of that *Mercy* which delivered the one, and that *Justice* which punished the other; and of the Arm of that Power whereby he effected both his Gracious and his Righteous Purposes.

Doctr.

Whence observe, That the Judgments of God upon his Enemies, as well as his Mercies to his People, are matter of Praise. The Perfections of God appear in both.



both. *Justice* and *Mercy* are so linkt together in his acts of Providence, that the one cannot be forgotten while the other is acknowledged. He is never so Terrible as in the *Assemblies of his Saints*, and the Deliverance of them, *Psal. 89. 7.* As the Creation was erected by him for his Glory; so all the Acts of his Government are design'd for the same end: And his Creatures deny him his due, if they acknowledge not his Excellency in whatsoever dreadful, as well as pleasing Garbs, it appears in the World. His Terror as well as his Righteousness appears, when he is a *God of Salvation*. *Psal. 65. 5. By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, oh God of our Salvation.*

But the Expression I pitch upon in the *Text* to handle, is *Glorious in Holiness*. He is *Magnified* or *Honourable in Holiness*; so the word *קדש* is translated *Isa. 42. 21. He will magnifie the Law and make it honourable.* Thy Holiness hath shone forth admirably in this last Exploit, against the Enemies and Oppressors of thy People. The *Holiness* of God is his Glory, as his *Grace* is his Riches: *Holiness* is his Crown, and his *Mercy* is his Treasure. This is the Blessedness and Nobleness of his Nature; it renders him Glorious in himself, and Glorious to his Creatures, that understand any thing of this lovely Perfection.

*Holiness* is a glorious Perfection belonging to the Nature of God. Hence he is *Doctr.* in Scripture styled often the *Holy one*, the *Holy one of Jacob*, the *Holy one of Israel*; and oftner entituled *Holy*, than *Almighty*, and set forth by this part of his Dignity more than by any other. This is more affix'd as an Epithete to his Name than any other: You never find it express, his *Mighty Name*, or his *Wise Name*; but his *Great Name*, and most of all, his *Holy Name*. This is his greatest Title of Honour, in this doth the Majesty and Venerableness of his Name appear. When the Sinfulness of *Senacherib* is aggravated, the Holy Ghost takes the rise from this Attribute, *2 Kings 19. 22. Thou hast lift up thine eyes on high, even against the Holy one of Israel*; not against the *Wise, Mighty, &c.* but against the *Holy one of Israel*, as that wherein the *Majesty* of God was most illustrious. 'Tis upon this account he is called *Light*, as Impurity is called *Darkness*; both in this sense are opposed to one another: He is a pure and unmixt Light, free from all blemish in his Essence, Nature, and Operations.

1. *Heathens have own'd it.* *Proclus* calls him, the *Undeiled Governour of the World*\*. The Poetical Transformations of their False gods, and the Extravagancies committed by them, was (in the account of the wisest of them) an unholy thing to report and hear†. || And some vindicate *Epicurus* from the Atheism wherewith he was commonly charged; that he did not deny the Being of God, but those Adulterous and contentious Deities the People worshipped, which were Practises unworthy and unbecoming the Nature of God. Hence they asserted, that Vertue was an Imitation of God, and a Vertuous Man bore a resemblance to God: If Vertue were a Copy from God, a greater Holiness must be owned in the Original. And when some of them were at a loss, how to free God from being the Author of Sin in the World, they ascribe the birth of Sin to Matter, and run into an absurd Opinion, fancying it to be uncreated, that thereby they might exempt God from all mixture of Evil; so Sacred with them was the Conception of God, as a *Holy God*.

\* *Alexand. in Gen. 1. 1. 2. 1. 3. 1. 4. 1. 5. 1. 6. 1. 7. 1. 8. 1. 9. 1. 10. 1. 11. 1. 12. 1. 13. 1. 14. 1. 15. 1. 16. 1. 17. 1. 18. 1. 19. 1. 20. 1. 21. 1. 22. 1. 23. 1. 24. 1. 25. 1. 26. 1. 27. 1. 28. 1. 29. 1. 30. 1. 31. 1. 32. 1. 33. 1. 34. 1. 35. 1. 36. 1. 37. 1. 38. 1. 39. 1. 40. 1. 41. 1. 42. 1. 43. 1. 44. 1. 45. 1. 46. 1. 47. 1. 48. 1. 49. 1. 50. 1. 51. 1. 52. 1. 53. 1. 54. 1. 55. 1. 56. 1. 57. 1. 58. 1. 59. 1. 60. 1. 61. 1. 62. 1. 63. 1. 64. 1. 65. 1. 66. 1. 67. 1. 68. 1. 69. 1. 70. 1. 71. 1. 72. 1. 73. 1. 74. 1. 75. 1. 76. 1. 77. 1. 78. 1. 79. 1. 80. 1. 81. 1. 82. 1. 83. 1. 84. 1. 85. 1. 86. 1. 87. 1. 88. 1. 89. 1. 90. 1. 91. 1. 92. 1. 93. 1. 94. 1. 95. 1. 96. 1. 97. 1. 98. 1. 99. 1. 100. 1.*

2. *The Absurdest Hereticks have own'd it.* \* The *Manichees* and *Marchionites*, that thought Evil came by Necessity, yet would salve Gods being the Author of it, by asserting two distinct Eternal Principles, One the Original of Evil, as God was the Fountain of good: So rooted was the Notion of this Divine Purity, that none would ever slander Goodness it self with that which was so disparaging to it.

\* *Petav. Theol. Dogmat. Tom. 1. lib. 6. cap. 5. p. 415.*

3. *The Nature of God cannot rationally be conceived without it.* Though the Power of God be the first Rational conclusion, drawn from the sight of his Works; *Wisdom* the next, from the order and connexion of his Works: *Purity* must result from the beauty of his Works: That God cannot be deform'd by Evil, who hath made every thing so Beautiful in its time. The Notion of a God cannot be entertain'd without separating from him whatsoever is impure and bespotting both in his Essence and Actions. Though we conceive him Infinite in Majesty,

jeſty,



jestly, Infinite in Essence, Eternal in Duration, Mighty in Power, and Wise and Im-mutable in his Counsels; Merciful in his proceedings with Men, and whatsoever other Perfections may dignifie so Sovereign a Being; yet if we conceive him destitute of this excellent Perfection, and imagine him possessed with the least contagion of Evil, we make him but an Infinite Monster, and sully all those Perfections we ascrib'd to him before; we rather own him a *Devil*, than a God. 'Tis a contradiction to be God and to be Darkness, or to have one Mote of Darkness mixed with his Light. 'Tis a less Injury to him to deny his Being, than to deny the Purity of it; the one makes him no God, the other a deform'd, unlovely, and a detestable God.

*Plutarch* said not amiss, That he should count himself less injured by that Man, that should deny that there was such a Man as *Plutarch*, than by him that should affirm that there was such a one indeed, but he was a debauch'd Fellow, a loose and vicious Person. 'Tis a less wrong to God to discard any acknowledgments of his Being, and to count him Nothing; than to believe him to exist, but imagine a base and unholy Deity: He that saith, *God is not Holy*, speaks much worse than he that saith, *There is no God at all*.

Let these two Things be considered:

I. If any, this Attribute hath an excellency above his other Perfections. There are some Attributes of God we prefer, because of our Interest in them, and the relation they bear to us: As we esteem his *Goodness* before his *Power*; and his *Mercy* whereby he relieves us, before his *Justice* whereby he punisheth us. As there are some we more delight in, because of the goodness we receive by them; so there are some that God delights to honour, because of their Excellency.

1. None is sounded out so loftily with such solemnity, and so frequently by Angels that stand before his Throne, as this. Where do you find any other Attribute trebled in the Praises of it, as this? *Isai. 6. 3. Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory*; and *Rev. 4. 8. The four Beasts rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God, Almighty, &c.* His Power or Sovereignty, as *Lord of Hosts*, is but once mentioned; but with a ternal repetition of his Holiness. Do you hear in any Angelical Song any other Perfection of the Divine Nature thrice repeated? Where do we read of the crying out *Eternal, Eternal, Eternal*; or *Faithful, Faithful, Faithful Lord God of Hosts*? Whatsoever other Attribute is left out, this God would have to fill the Mouths of Angels and Blessed Spirits for ever in Heaven.

2. He singles it out to swear by. *Psal. 89. 35. Once have I sworn by my Holiness, that I will not lye unto David*: And *Amos 4. 2. The Lord will swear by his Holiness*: He twice swears by his Holiness; once by his Power, *Isai. 62. 8.* once by all, when he swears by his Name, *Jer. 44. 26.* He lays here his Holiness to pledge for the assurance of his Promise, as the Attribute most dear to him, most valued by him, as though no other could give an assurance parallel to it in this concern of an Everlasting Redemption which is there spoken of: He that swears, swears by a greater than himself; God having no greater than himself, swears by himself: And swearing here by his Holiness, seems to equal that single one to all his other Attributes; as if he were more concern'd in the Honour of it, than of all the rest. 'Tis as if he should have said, since I have not a more excellent Perfection to swear by, than that of my Holiness, I lay this to pawn for your Security, and bind my self by that which I will never part with, were it possible for me to be stript of all the rest. 'Tis a tacit Imprecation of himself, If I lye unto *David*, let me never be counted *holy*, or thought righteous enough to be trusted by Angels or Men. This Attribute he makes most of.

3. 'Tis his glory and beauty. Holiness is the Honour of the Creature, *sanctification and honour* are linkt together, *1 Thess. 4. 4.* much more is it the honour of God; 'tis the *Image of God* in the Creature\*: When we take the Picture of a Man, we draw the most beautiful part, the Face, which is a Member of the greatest excellency. When God would be drawn to the Life, as much as can be, in the Spirit of his Creatures, He is drawn in this Attribute, as being the most beautiful Perfection of God, and most valuable with him. Power is his Hand and Arm,

Omni

\* Ephes. 4. 24.



Omniscience, his Eye; Mercy, his Bowels; Eternity, his Duration; his Holiness is his Beauty; 2 Chron. 20, 21. — *should praise the Beauty of Holiness.* In the 27th Psalm and the 4th Verse, David desires to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and enquire in his Holy Temple; that is, the Holiness of God manifested in his hatred of Sin in the daily sacrifices. Holiness was the Beauty of the Temple, *Isai. 46. 11. Holy and Beautiful House* are joyned together; much more the Beauty of God that dwelt in the Sanctuary.

This renders him lovely to all his Innocent Creatures, though formidable to the Guilty ones. \* A Heathen Philosopher could call it, the *Beauty of the Divine Essence*, and say, That God was not so happy by an Eternity of Life, as by an Excellency of Vertue. And the Angels Song intimate it to be his glory, *Isaiab 6. 3. The whole Earth is full of thy Glory*; that is, of his Holiness in his Laws, and in his Judgments against Sin; that being the Attribute applauded by them before.

\* Plutarch.  
Eugubio. de  
Fortuni Ph  
lib. 6. cap. 6.

4. 'Tis his very life. So it is called *Ephes. 4. 18. Alienated from the Life of God*, that is, from the Holiness of God; speaking of the opposite to it, the *Uncleaness and Prophaneess* of the Gentiles. We are only alienated from that which we are bound to imitate; but this is the Perfection, always set out as the Pattern of our Actions, *Be you holy, as I am Holy*; no other is proposed as our Copy. Alienated from that *Purity of God*, which is as much as his Life, without which he could not live. If he were stript of this, he would be a dead God more, than by the want of any other Perfection. His Swearing by it intimates as much; He Swears often by his own Life, *As I live, saith the Lord*: so he Swears by his Holiness, as if it were his Life, and more his Life than any other. *Let me not live, or Let me not be Holy*, are all one in his Oath. His Deity could not outlive the Life of his Purity.

II. As it seems to challenge an Excellency above all his other Perfections, so 'tis the glory of all the rest. As it is the glory of the Godhead, so 'tis the glory of every Perfection in the Godhead. As his Power is the Strength of them, so his Holiness is the Beauty of them. As all would be weak without *Almightiness* to back them; so all would be uncomely without *Holiness* to adorn them. Should this be sullied, all the rest would lose their Honour and their comfortable Efficacy. As at the same instant that the Sun should lose its Light, it would lose its Heat, its Strength, its generative and quickening virtue. As *Sincerity* is the lustre of every Grace in a Christian; so is *Purity* the splendor of every Attribute in the Godhead. His Justice, is a holy Justice; his Wisdom, a holy Wisdom; his Arm of Power, a *Holy Arm*, *Psal. 98. 1.* his Truth or Promise, a *Holy Promise*, *Psal. 105. 42.* *Holy and True* go hand in hand, *Revel. 6. 10.* His Name, which signifies all his Attributes in conjunction, is *Holy*, *Psal. 103. 1.* Yea, he is *Righteous in all his waies, and Holy in all his works*, *Psal. 145. 17.* 'Tis the Rule of all his Acts, the Source of all his Punishments. If every Attribute of the Deity were a distinct Member, *Purity* would be the Form, the Soul, the Spirit to animate them. Without it, his *Patience* would be an Indulgence to Sin, his *Mercy* a Fondness, his *Wrath* a Madness, his *Power* a Tyranny, his *Wisdom* an unworthy Subtily. 'Tis this gives a *Decorum* to all. His *Mercy* is not exercis'd without it, since he pardons none but those that have an Interest, by Union, in the Obedience of a Mediator, which was so delightful to his Infinite Purity. His *Justice*, which Guilty man is apt to tax with Cruelty and Violence in the exercise of it, is not acted out of the compass of this Rule. In Acts of Mans vindictive Justice there is something of Impurity, Perturbation, Passion, some mixture of Cruelty; but none of these fall upon God in the severest Acts of Wrath. When God appears to *Ezekiel* in the resemblance of *Fire*, to signify his Anger against the *House of Judah* for their Idolatry, from his Loyns downward there was the appearance of *Fire*; but from the Loyns upward, the appearance of *Brightness, as the colour of Amber*, *Ezek. 8. 2.* His Heart is clear in his most Terrible acts of Vengeance, 'tis a pure Flame where-with he scorseth and burns his Enemies: He is *Holy* in the most fiery appearance.

This Attribute therefore is never so much applauded, as when his Sword hath been drawn, and he hath manifested the greatest fierceness against his Enemies.

The Magnificent and Triumphant expression of it in the Text, follows just upon

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Gods Miraculous defeat and ruine of the *Egyptian Army*, *The Sea covered them; they sank as Lead in the mighty waters*: Then it follows, *Who is like unto thee, oh Lord, glorious in Holiness?* And when it was so celebrated by the *Seraphims*, *Isai. 6. 3.* it was when the *Posts moved*, and the *House was filled with smoke*, v. 4. which are signs of Anger, *Psal. 18. 7, 8.* And when he was about to send *Isaiab* upon a Message of Spiritual and Temporal Judgments, that he would make the *heart of that people fat, and their ears heavy, and their eyes shut; waste their Cities without Inhabitant, and their Houses without Man, and make the Land desolate*, Verses 9, 10, 11, 12. and the Angels which here applaud him for his Holiness, are the Executioners of his Justice; and here called *Seraphims*, from *burning*, or *fiery Spirits*, as being the Ministers of his Wrath. His Justice is part of his Holiness, whereby he doth reduce into order those things that are out of order. When he is consuming Men by his Fury, he doth not diminish, but manifest Purity; *Zephany 3. 5.* *The just Lord is in the midst of her, he will do no Iniquity.* Every Action of his is free from all tincture of Evil. 'Tis also celebrated with Praise by the *four Beasts* about his *Throne*, when he appears in a *Covenant garb*, with a *Rain-bow about his Throne*. and yet with *Thundrings* and *Lightnings* shot out against his Enemies, *Revel. 4. 8.* compared with *vers. 3. 5.* to shew, that all his Acts of Mercy as well as Justice, are clear from any stain.

This is the Crown of all his Attributes, the Life of all his Decrees, the Brightness of all his Actions: Nothing is Decreed by him, nothing is acted by him but what is worthy of the Dignity, and becoming the Honour of this Attribute.

For the better understanding this Attribute, observe,

1. *The Nature of this Holiness.*
2. *The Demonstration of it.*
3. *The Purity of his Nature in all his Acts about Sin.*
4. *The Use of all to our selves.*

First, *The Nature of Divine Holiness.*

*In General.*

The Holiness of God Negatively, is a perfect and unpolluted freedom from all Evil. As we call Gold pure that is not embased by any Dross, and that Garment clean that is free from any Spot; so the Nature of God is estranged from all shadow of Evil, all imaginable contagion.

Positively, 'Tis the Rectitude or Integrity of the Divine Nature, or that conformity of it in Affection and Action to the Divine Will, as to his Eternal Law, whereby he works with a becomingness to his own Excellency, and whereby he hath a delight and complacency in every thing agreeable to his Will, and an abhorrency of every thing contrary thereunto.

As there is no darkness in his Understanding, so there is no spot in his Will: As his Mind is possessed with all Truth, so there is no deviation in his Will from it. He loves all Truth and Goodness; He hates all falsity and Evil. In regard of his Righteousness, he loves Righteousness; *Psal. 11. 7.* *The righteous Lord loveth righteousness*; and, *hath no pleasure in wickedness, Psal. 5. 4.* He values Purity in his Creatures, and detests all Impurity, whether inward or outward. || We may indeed distinguish the Holiness of God from his Righteousness in our Conceptions: Holiness is a Perfection absolutely considered in the Nature of God; Righteousness, a Perfection as referred to others in his Actions towards them and upon them.

|| Martin. de  
Dio, p. 86.

*In Particular.*

This Property of the Divine Nature is,

First, *An essential and necessary Perfection*: He is essentially and necessarily Holy. 'Tis the essential glory of his Nature: His Holiness is as necessary as his Being; as necessary as his Omniscience: As he cannot but know what is right, so he



He cannot but do what is just. His Understanding is not as Created Understandings, capable of Ignorance as well as Knowledge; so his Will is not as Created Wills, capable of Unrighteousness, as well as Righteousness. There can be no contradiction or contrariety in the Divine Nature, to know what is right, and to do what is wrong: If so, there would be a diminution of his Blessedness, he would not be a God alway blessed, *Blessed for ever*, as he is \*. He is as necessarily Holy, as he is necessarily God; as necessarily without Sin, as without Change. As he was God from Eternity, so he was Holy from Eternity. † He was Gracious, Merciful, Just in his own Nature, and also Holy; though no Creature had been framed by him to exercise his Grace, Mercy, Justice, or Holiness upon. If God had not created a World, he had in his own Nature been Almighty, and able to Create a World. If there never had been any thing but himself, yet he had been Omniscient, knowing every thing that was within the verge and compass of his Infinite Power; so he was Pure in his own Nature, though he never had brought forth any Rational Creature whereby to manifest this Purity. These Perfections are so necessary, that the Nature of God could not subsist without them. And the acts of those *ad intra*, or within himself, are necessary; for being Omniscient in Nature, there must be an act of knowledge of himself and his own Nature. Being Infinitely Holy, an act of Holiness in Infinitely loving himself, must necessarily flow from this Perfection. As the Divine Will cannot but be perfect; so it cannot be wanting to render the highest Love to it self, to its Goodness, to the Divine Nature, which is due to him. Indeed the acts of those *ad extra* are not necessary, but upon a condition. To love Righteousness without himself, or to detest Sin, or inflict Punishment for the committing of it, could not have been, had there been no Righteous Creature for him to love, no Sinning Creature for him to loath, and to exercise his Justice upon as the Object of Punishment.

\* Rom 9. 5.

† Tertullian. de Satisfactione. p. 28.

Ochino, Pre-dic. p. 4. Bede. 31. p. 347, 348.

Some Attributes require a Condition to make the Acts of them necessary. As it is at Gods liberty, whether he will create a Rational Creature, or no: But when he decrees to make either Angel or Man, 'tis necessary from the Perfection of his Nature to make them Righteous. 'Tis at Gods liberty whether he will speak to Man, or no; but if he doth, 'tis impossible for him to speak that which is false, because of his Infinite Perfection of Veracity. 'Tis at his liberty whether he will permit a Creature to Sin; but if he sees good to suffer it, 'tis impossible but that he should detest that Creature that goes cross to his Righteous Nature. His Holiness is not solely an Act of his Will, for then he might be Unholy as well as Holy; he might love Iniquity and hate Righteousness; he might then command that which is good, and afterwards command that which is bad and unworthy: For what is only an Act of his Will, and not belonging to his Nature, is indifferent to him. As the positive Law he gave to Adam, of not eating the *Forbidden Fruit*, was a pure Act of his Will; he might have given him liberty to eat of it, if he had pleased, as well as prohibited him. But what is Moral and good in its own Nature, is necessarily willed by God, and cannot be changed by him, because of the transcendent Eminency of his Nature, and Righteousness of his Will. As it is impossible for God to command his Creature to hate him, or to dispence with a Creature for not loving him; for this would be to command a thing intrinsically Evil, the highest Ingratitude, the very Spirit of all Wickedness, which consists in the hating God. Yet though God be thus necessarily Holy, he is not so by a bare and simple necessity, as the Sun shines, or the Fire burns; but by a free necessity, not compelled thereunto, but inclined from the fulness of the Perfection of his own Nature and Will; so as by no means he can be Unholy, because he will not be Unholy; 'tis against his Nature to be so.

2. God is only absolutely Holy. There is none Holy as the Lord. 'Tis the peculiar glory of his Nature. As there is none Good but God, so none Holy but God. No Creature can be essentially Holy, because Mutable: Holiness is the substance of God; but a Quality and Accident in a Creature. God is Infinitely Holy, Creatures Finitely Holy. He is holy from Himself, Creatures are holy by derivation from him. He is not only Holy, but Holiness; Holiness, in the highest degree, is his sole Prerogative. As the highest Heaven is called the *Heaven of Heavens*,

1 Sam. 2. 2.



*Heavens*, because it embraceth in its Circle all the Heavens, and contains the Magnitude of them, and hath a greater vastness above all that it incloseth; for God the *Holy of Holies*, He contains the Holiness of all Creatures put together, and Infinitely more. As all the Wisdom, Excellency, and Power of the Creatures, if compar'd with the Wisdom, Excellency, and Power of God, is but Folly, Vileness, and Weakness; so the highest created Purity, if set in parall with God, is but Impurity and Uncleaness. *Revel. 15. 4. Thou only art Holy*: 'Tis like the light of a *Glow-worm* to that of the *Sun*; *The Heavens are not pure in his sight, and his Angels be charged with folly*, Job 4 18. Though God hath Crowned the Angels with an unspotted Sanctity, and placed them in a habitation of Glory; yet as Illustrious as they are, they have an Unworthiness in their own Nature to appear before the Throne of so Holy a God; Their holiness grows dim and pale in his Presence. 'Tis but a weak shadow of that Divine Purity, whose Light is so glorious, that it makes them cover their faces out of weakness to behold it, and cover their Feet out of shame in themselves. They are not pure in his sight, because though they love God (which is a Principle of Holiness) as much as they can, yet not so much as he deserves: They love him with the intensest degree, according to their Power; but not with the intensest degree, according to his own Amiability: For they cannot infinitely love God, unless they were as Infinite as God, and had an understanding of his Perfections equal with himself, and as immense as his own Knowledge. God having an Infinite Knowledge of himself, can only have an Infinite Love to himself, and consequently an Infinite Holiness without any defect; because he loves himself according to the vastness of his own Amiability, which no finite Being can. Therefore, though the Angels be exempt from Corruption and Soil, they cannot enter into comparison with the Purity of God, without acknowledgment of a dimness in themselves. Besides, *He charges them with folly*, and *puts no trust* in them; because they have the power of sinning, though not the act of sinning: They have a possible Folly in their own Nature to be charged with. *Holiness* is a quality separable from them, but it is inseparable from God. Had they not at first a mutability in their Nature, none of them could have sinned, there had been no *Devils*; but because some of them sinned, the rest might have sinned: And though the standing Angels shall never be changed, yet they are still changeable in their own Nature, and their standing is due to Grace, not to Nature; and though they shall be for ever preserved, yet they are not, nor ever can be Immutable by Nature, for then they should stand upon the same bottom with God himself; but they are supported by Grace against that Changeableness of Nature which is essential to a Creature: The Creator only

1 Tim. 3. 15.

*hath Immortality*, that is, Immutability. 'Tis as certain a Truth, that no Creature can be naturally Immutable and Impeccable, as that God cannot create any thing actually polluted and imperfect. 'Tis as possible that the highest Creature may sin, as it is possible that it may be annihilated: It may become not holy, as it may become not a Creature, but Nothing. The Holiness of a Creature may be reduc'd into Nothing, as well as his Substance: But the Holiness of the Creator cannot be diminish'd, dimm'd, or overshadowed; *James 1. 17. He is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning*. 'Tis as impossible his Holiness should be blotted, as that his Deity should be extinguish'd: For whatsoever Creature hath essentially such or such qualities, cannot be stript of them, without being turned out of its Essence. As a Man is essentially Rational; and if he ceaseth to be Rational, he ceaseth to be Man. The Sun is essentially Luminous; if it should become dark in its own Body, it would cease to be the Sun. In regard of this absolute and only Holiness of God, 'tis thrice repeated by the *Seraphims*, *Isai. 6. 3. The Threefold Repetition* of a word notes the Certainty or Absoluteness of the thing, or the Irreversibleness of the Resolve; as *Ezek. 21. 27. I will overturn, overturn, overturn*, notes the Certainty of the Judgment; also *Revel. 8. 8. Woe, woe, woe*, Three times repeated, signifies the same. The Holiness of God is so absolutely peculiar to him, that it can no more be express'd in Creatures, than his Omnipotence, whereby they may be able to create a World; or his Omniscience, whereby they may be capable of knowing all things, and knowing God as he knows himself.



3. *God is so holy, that he cannot possibly approve of any Evil done by another, but doth perfectly abhor it;* it would not else be a glorious holiness: *Plal. 5. 3. He hath no pleasure in wickedness.* He doth not only love that which is just, but abhor with a perfect hatred, all things contrary to the Rule of Righteousness. Holiness can no more approve of sin than it can commit it: To be delighted with the evil in anothers act, contracts a Guilt, as well as the Commission of it; for approbation of a thing is a consent to it: Sometime the approbation of an evil in another is a more grievous Crime than the act itself, as appears in *Rom. 1. 32.* who knowing the Judgment of God, *not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do it:* Where the (not only) manifests it to be a greater guilt to take pleasure in them. Every sin is aggravated by the delight in it; to take pleasure in the evil of anothers Act on, shews a more ardent affection and love to sin, than the Committer himself may have. This therefore can as little fall upon God, as to do an evil act himself; yet as a man may be delighted with the Consequences of anothers sin, as it may occasion some publick good, or private good to the guilty person; as sometimes it may be an occasion of his repentance, when the horridness of a fact stares him in the face, and occasions a self-reflection for that, and other Crimes, which is attended with an indignation against them, and sincere remorse for them; so God is pleased with those good things his Goodness and Wisdom bring forth upon the occasion of sin. But in regard of his Holiness, he cannot approve of the evil, whence his Infinite Wisdom drew forth his own glory, and his Creatures good: His Pleasure is not in the sinful act of the Creature, but in the act of his own goodness and skill turning it to another end than what the Creature aimed at.

1. *He abhors it necessarily.* Holiness is the glory of the Deity, therefore necessary. The Nature of God is so holy, that he cannot but hate it. *Hab. 1. 13. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:* He is more opposite to it, than light to darkness, and therefore it can expect no countenance from him: A love of holiness cannot be without a hatred of every thing that is contrary to it: As God necessarily loves himself, so he must necessarily hate every thing that is against himself: And as he loves himself for his own excellency and holiness, he must necessarily detest whatsoever is repugnant to his holiness, because of the evil of it: Since he is infinitely good, he cannot but love goodness, as it is a resemblance to himself, and cannot but abhor unrighteousness, as being most distant from him, and contrary to him. If he have any esteem for his own Perfections, he must needs have an implacable aversion to all that is so repugnant to him, that would, if it were possible, destroy him, and is a point directed, not only against his glory, but against his life. If he did not hate it, he would hate himself: For since Righteousness is his Image, and Sin would deface his Image; if he did not love his Image, and loath what is against his Image, he would loath himself, he would be an Enemy to his own Nature: † Nay, if it were possible for him to love it, it were possible for him not to be holy, it were possible then for him to deny himself, and will that he were no God, which is a palpable Contradiction. Yet this necessity in God of hating sin, is not a brutish necessity, such as is in meer Animals, that avoid by a natural Instinct, not of choice, what is prejudicial to them; but most free, as well as necessary, arising from an infinite knowledge of his own Nature, and of the evil nature of Sin, and the contrariety of it to his own Excellency, and the order of his works.

2. *Therefore intensely.* Nothing do men act for more than their glory. As he doth infinitely, and therefore perfectly know himself, so he infinitely, and therefore perfectly knows what is contrary to himself, and, as according to the manner and measure of his knowledge of himself, is his love to himself, as infinite as his knowledge, and therefore unexpressible and unconceivable by us: So from the perfection of his knowledge of the evil of Sin, which is infinitely above what any Creature can have, doth arise a displeasure against it suitable to that knowledge. In Creatures the degrees of affection to, or aversion from a thing, are suited to the strength of their apprehensions of the good or evil in them. God knows not only the workers of wickedness, but the wickedness of their works, for *he knows vain men, he sees wickedness also.* The vehemency of this hatred is express'd variously in Scripture; he loathes it so, that he is impatient of beholding it: the very sight

† Turretin. de  
latif. p. 35.  
35.

[Job 11: 11.]



of it affects him with detestation, *Hab. 1. 13.* he hates the first spark of it in the imagination, *Zach. 8. 17.* with what variety of expressions doth he repeat his indignation at their polluted Services; *Amos 5. 21, 22. I hate, I detest, I despise, I will not smell, I will not accept, I will not regard; take away from me the noise of thy Songs, I will not hear.* So *Isai. 1. 14. My Soul hates, they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them.* 'Tis the abominable thing that he hates, *Jer. 44. 4.* he is vexed and fretted at it, *Isai. 63. 10. Ezek. 16. 43.* He abhors it so, that his hatred redounds upon the Person that commits it. *Psal. 5. 5. He hates all workers of Iniquity.* Sin is the only primary Object of his Displeasure: He is not displeas'd with the Nature of man as man, for that was derived from him; but with the Nature of man as sinful, which is from the sinner himself. When a man hath but one Object for the exercise of all his Anger, 'tis stronger than when diverted to many Objects: A mighty Torrent, when diverted into many Streams is weaker than when it comes in a full Body upon once place only. The Infinite anger and hatred of God, which is as infinite as his love and mercy, has no other Object, against which he directs the mighty force of it, but only Unrighteousness. He hates no Person for all the penal Evils upon him, though they were more by ten thousand times than Job was struck with, but only for his sin. Again, Sin being only evil, and an unmixt evil, there is nothing in it that can abate the detestation of God, or ballance his hatred of it; there is not the least grain of goodness in it, to encline him to the least affection to any part of it. This hatred cannot but be intense; for as the more any Creature is sanctified, the more is he advanc'd in the abhorrence of that which is contrary to Holiness; therefore God being the Highest, most Absolute and Infinite Holiness, doth infinitely, and therefore intensely, hate unholiness; being infinitely righteous, doth infinitely abhor unrighteousness; being infinitely true, doth infinitely abhor falsity, as it is the greatest and most deformed evil. As it is from the righteousness of his Nature, that he hath a content and satisfaction in righteousness: *Psal. 11. 7. The righteous Lord loveth righteousness.* So it is from the same righteousness of his Nature, that he detests whatsoever is morally evil: As his Nature therefore is Infinite, so must his abhorrence be.

3. *Therefore universally, because necessarily and intensely.* He doth not hate it in one, and indulge it in another, but loaths it wherever he finds it; not one worker of Iniquity is exempt from it: *Psal. 5. 5. Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.* For it is not sin, as in this or that person, or as great or little; but sin, as sin is the Object of his hatred: And therefore let the person be never so great, and have particular Characters of his Image upon him, it secures him not from God's hatred of any evil action he shall commit. He is a jealous God, jealous of his Glory; a Metaphor taken from jealous Husbands, who will not indure the least Adultery in their Wives, nor God the least defection of man from his Law. Every act of sin is a spiritual Adultery, denying God to be the chief Good, and giving that Prerogative by that Act to some vile thing. He loves it no more in his own People than he doth in his Enemies; he frees them not from his Rod, the testimony of his loathing their Crimes: Whosoever sows Iniquity, shall reap Affliction. It might be thought that he affected their Dross, if he did not refine them, and loved their filth, if he did not cleanse them; because of his detestation of their sin, he will not spare them from the Furnace, though because of love to their persons in Christ, he will exempt them from Tophet. How did the Sword ever and anon drop down upon David's Family after his unworthy dealing in Uriah's Case, and cut off ever and anon some of the Branches of it? He doth sometimes punish it more severely in this Life in his own People, than in others: Upon Jonah's Disobedience a Storm pursues him, and a Whale devours him, while the Prophane World lived in their Lulls without controul. Moses for one act of Unbelief is excluded from Canaan, when greater Sinners attained that happiness. 'Tis not a light punishment, but a vengeance he takes on their Inventions†, to manifest that he hates sin as sin, and not because the worst persons commit it. Perhaps, had a prophane Man touched the Ark, the hand of God had not so suddenly reach'd him: But when Uzzah, a man zealous for him, as may be supposed by his care for the support of the tottering Ark, would step out of his place, he strikes him down for his disobedient Action; by

\* Exod. 20. 5.

† Psal. 59. 2.



by the side of the Ark, which he would indirectly (as not being a *Levite*) sustain †. † 2 Sam. 6.7  
 Nor did our Saviour so sharply reprove the *Pharisees*, and turn so short from them as he did from *Peter*, when he gave a carnal advise, and contrary to that wherein was to be the greatest manifestation of God's Holiness, viz. the Death of Christ †. He calls him *Satan*, a name sharper than the title of the Devil's Children wherewith he marked the Pharisees, and given (besides him) to none but *Judas*, who made a profession of love to him, and was outwardly rank'd in the number of his Disciples. A Gardiner hates a Weed the more for being in the bed with the most pretious Flowers. God's hatred is universally fixed against sin, and he hates it as much in those whose Persons shall not fall under his eternal Anger, as being secured in the Arms of a Redeemer, by whom the Guilt is wip'd of, and the filth shall be totally washed away: Though he hates their sin, and cannot but hate it, yet he loves their Persons, as being united as Members to the Mediator and Mystical Head. A man may love a gangren'd Member, because 'tis a Member of his own Body, or a Member of a dear Relation, but he loaths the gangrene in it more than in those wherein he is not so much concern'd.

Though God's hatred of Believers Persons is removed by Faith in the Satisfactory Death of Jesus Christ; yet his Antipathy against sin was not taken away by that Blood; nay, it was impossible it should: It was never design'd, nor had it any capacity to alter the unchangeable Nature of God, but to manifest the unspottedness of his Will, and his eternal Aversion to any thing that was contrary to the Purity of his Being, and the Righteousness of his Laws.

4. *Perpetually*: This must necessarily follow upon the others. He can no more cease to hate Impurity, than he can cease to love Holiness: If he should in the least instant approve of any thing that is filthy, in that moment he would disapprove of his own Nature and Being; there would be an interruption in his love of himself, which is as Eternal as it is Infinite. How can he love any sin, which is contrary to his Nature, but for one moment, without hating his own Nature, which is essentially contrary to sin? Two Contraries cannot be loved at the same time; God must first begin to hate himself, before he can approve of any evil which is directly opposite to himself. We indeed are changed with a Temptation, sometimes bear an affection to it, and sometimes testify an indignation against it; but God is always the same without any shadow of change, and is angry with the wicked every day, *Psal. 7. 11.* that is, uninterruptedly in the nature of his Anger, though not in the effects of it. God indeed may be reconciled to the Sinner, but never to the sin; for then he should renounce himself, deny his own Essence and his own Divinity, if his inclinations to the love of Goodness, and his aversion from Evil could be changed; if he suffered the Contempt of the one, and encouraged the Practice of the other.

4. *God is so holy, that he cannot but love Holiness in others.* Not that he owes any thing to his Creature, but from the unspeakable holiness of his Nature, whence affections to all things that bear a resemblance of him do flow; as Light shoots out from the Sun, or any glittering Body: 'Tis essential to the infinite Righteousness of his Nature to love Righteousness wherever he beholds it: *Psal. 11. 7. The righteous Lord loveth righteousness.* He cannot, because of his Nature, but love that which bears some agreement with his Nature, that which is the curious Draught of his own Wisdom and Purity: He cannot but be delighted with a Copy of himself: He would not have a holy Nature, if he did not love Holiness in every Nature: His own Nature would be denied by him, if he did not affect every thing that had a Stamp of his own Nature upon it. There was indeed nothing without God, that could invite him to manifest such Goodness to man, as he did in Creation: But after he had stamp'd that rational Nature with a Righteousness convenient for it, it was impossible but that he should ardently love that Impression of himself, because he loves his own Deity, and consequently all things which are any Sparks and Images of it: And were the Devils capable of an act of Righteousness, the Holiness of his Nature would incline him to love it, even in those dark and revolted Spirits.



\* Jam. 3. 11.

5. *God is so holy, that he cannot positively will or encourage sin in any.* How can he give any Encouragement to that, which he cannot in the least approve of, or look upon without loathing, not only the Crime but the Criminal? Light may sooner be the cause of Darkness, than Holiness it self be the cause of Unholiness, absolutely contrary to it: 'Tis a Contradiction, that he that is the Fountain of Good, should be the source of Evil; as if the same Fountain should bubble up both sweet and bitter Streams; salt and fresh\*. Since whatsoever Good is in man, acknowledges God for its Author, it follows that men are Evil by their own fault. There is no need for men to be incited to that, to which the Corruption of their own Nature doth so powerfully bend them. Water hath a forcible principle in its own Nature to carry it downward; it needs no force to hasten the motion: *God tempts no man, but every man is drawn away by his own Lust, Jam 1. 13. 14.* All the preparations for glory are from God, *Rom. 9. 23.* but men are said to be *fit- ted to destruction, Verse 22.* but God is not said to fit them; they by their Iniquities fit themselves for ruine, and he by his long suffering keeps the destruction from them for a while.

1. *First, God cannot command any Unrighteousness.* As all Vertue is summ'd up in a love to God, so all Iniquity is summ'd up in an enmity to God: Every wicked Work declares a man an Enemy to God: *Col. 1. 21. Enemies in your minds by wicked Works.* If he could command his Creature any thing which bears an enmity in its Nature to himself, he would then implicitly command the hatred of himself, and he would be in some measure a hater of himself: He that commands another to deprive him of his Life, cannot be said to bear any love to his own Life. God can never hate himself, and therefore cannot command any thing that is hateful to him, and tends to a hating of him, and driving the Creature further from him. In that very moment that God should command such a thing, he would cease to be Good. What can be more absurd to imagine, then that infinite Goodness should enjoyn a thing contrary to it self, and contrary to the essential Duty of a Creature, and order him to do any thing that bespeaks an enmity to the Nature of the Creator, or a deflouring and disparaging his Works? God cannot but love himself, and his own Goodness, he were not otherwise Good; and therefore cannot order the Creature to do any thing opposite to this Goodness, or any thing hurtful to the Creature it self, as Unrighteousness is.

† Deut. 32. 4.

2. *Nor can God secretly inspire any Evil into us.* 'Tis as much against his Nature to incline the heart to sin, as it is to command it: As it is impossible but that he should love himself, and therefore impossible to enjoyn any thing that tends to a hatred of himself; by the same reason it is as impossible that he should infuse such a Principle in the heart, that might carry a man out to any act of Enmity against him. To enjoyn one thing, and incline to another, would be an Argument of such insincerity, unfaithfulness, contradiction to it self, that it cannot be conceived to fall within the Compass of the Divine Nature †, who is *a God without iniquity, because a God of truth and sincerity, just and right is he.* To bestow excellent Faculties upon Man in Creation, and incline him by a suddain impulsion to things contrary to the true end of him, and induce an inevitable ruin upon that Work, which he had compos'd with so much Wisdom and Goodness, and pronounced good with so much delight and Pleasure, is inconsistent with that love which God bears to the Creature of his own framing: To incline his Will to that which would render him the Object of his hatred, the Fuel for his Justice, and sink him into deplorable Misery, 'tis most absurd, and unchristian-like to imagine.

3. *Nor can God necessitate man to sin.* Indeed sin cannot be committed by force; there is no sin but is in some sort voluntary: Voluntary in the root, or voluntary in the branch; voluntary by an immediate act of the Will, or voluntary by a general or natural inclination of the Will. That is not a Crime, to which a man is violenc'd, without any concurrence of the Faculties of the Soul to that act; 'tis indeed not an act, but a passion; a man that is forced, is not an Agent, but a Patient under the force: But what necessity can there be upon Man from God, since he hath implanted such a Principle in him, that he cannot desire any thing but what is good, either really or apparently; and if a man mistakes the Object, 'tis his own



own fault; for God hath endowed him with Reason to discern, and liberty of Will to choose upon that Judgment.

And though 'tis to be acknowledged that God hath an Absolute Sovereign Dominion over his Creature, without any Limitation, and may do what he pleases, and dispose of it according to his own Will, as a *Potter doth with his Vessel*, *Rom. 9. 21.* according as the Church speaks, *Isa. 64. 8. We are the Clay, and thou our Potter; and we all are the work of thy hand:* Yet he cannot pollute any undefiled Creature by virtue of that Sovereign Power, which he hath to do what he will with it; because such an act would be contrary to the Foundation and Right of his Dominion, which consists in the excellency of his Nature, his immense Wisdom and unspotted Purity: If God should therefore do any such act, he would expunge the right of his Dominion, by blotting out that nature which renders him fit for that Dominion, and the exercise of it \*. Any Dominion which is exercis'd without the Rules of goodness, is not a true Sovereignty, but an insupportable Tyranny. God would cease to be a rightful Sovereign, if he ceased to be good; and he would cease to be good, if he did command, necessitate, or by any positive operation incline inwardly the heart of a Creature, directly to that which were morally evil, and contrary to the eminency of his own Nature.

\* Amyrald.  
disc. de Cal.  
104.

But that we may the better conceive of this, let us trace Man in his *first fall*, whereby he subjected himself and all his Posterity to the Curse of the Law and hatred of God; we shall find no foot-steps, either of Precept, outward force, or inward impulsion †. The plain story of Man's Apostacy dischargeth God from any interest in the Crime as an encouragement, and excuseth him from any appearance of suspicion, when he shewed him the Tree he had reserved, as a mark of his Sovereignty, and forbade him to eat of the Fruit of it: He backt the Prohibition with the threatening the greatest Evil, *viz. Death*; which could be understood to imply nothing less than the loss of all his happiness; and in that couch'd an assurance of the perpetuity of his felicity, if he did not rebelliously reach forth his hand to take and eat of the Fruit \*. 'Tis true, God had given that Fruit an excellency, *a goodness for food, and a pleasantness to the eye* †. He had given Man an appetite, whereby he was capable of desiring so pleasant a Fruit; but God had by Creation rang'd it under the Command of Reason, if man would have kept it in its due Obedience; he had fixed a severe Threatning to bar the unlawful Excursions of it: He had allowed him a multitude of other Fruits in the Garden, and given him liberty enough to satisfy his Curiosity in all except this only. Could there be any thing more obliging to Man, to let God have his reserve of that one Tree, than the grant of all the rest: and more deterring from any disobedient Attempt than so strict a Command, spirited with so dreadful a Penalty? God did not solicit him to rebel against him: A solicitation to it, and a command against it, were inconsistent. The Devil assaults him, and God permitted it, and stands as it were a Spectator of the issue of the Combat. There could be no necessity upon Man to listen to, and entertain the Suggestions of the Serpent: He had a power to resist him, and he had an answer ready for all the Devils Arguments, had they been multiplied to more than they were; the opposing the Order of God, had been a sufficient Confutation of all the Devils plausible reasonings: That Creator who hath given me my being, hath ordered me not to eat of it. Though the pleasure of the Fruit might allure him, yet the force of his Reason might have quell'd the liquorishness of his Sense: The perpetual thinking of, and sounding out the command of God, had silenc'd both *Satan* and his own Appetite; had disarm'd the Tempter, and preserved his Sensitive part in its due subjection. What inclination can we suppose there could be from the Creator, when upon the very first offer of the Temptation, *Eve* opposes to the Tempter the Prohibition and Threatning of God, and strains it to a higher peg than we find God had delivered it in? For in *Gen. 2. 17.* 'tis *you shall not eat of it*; but she adds, *Gen. 3. 3. neither shall you touch it*: which was a Remark that might have had more influence to restrain her. Had our first Parents kept this fixed upon their Understandings and Thoughts, that God had forbidden any such act as the Eating of the Fruit, and that he was true to execute the Threatning he had uttered, of which Truth of God they could not but have a natural Notion, with what ease might they have withstood the Devils

† Amyrald. de  
sens. de Cal.  
vin. p. 151. 152

\* Gen. 2. 16. 17.  
† Gen. 3. 3.



attack'd, and defeated his Design? And it had been easie with them, to have kept their Understandings by the force of such a thought, from entertaining any contrary Imagination. There is no ground for any jealousie of any Encouragements, inward Impulsions, or necessity from God in this Affair. A discharge of God from this first sin will easily induce a freedom of him from all other sins which follow upon it.

God doth not then Encourage or Excite or Incline to sin. How can he excite to that, which when it is done, he will be sure to condemn? How can he be a *Righteous Judge* to sentence a sinner to Misery for a Crime acted by a secret Inspiration from himself? Iniquity would deserve no reproof from him, if he were any way positively the Author of it. Were God the Author of it in us, what is the reason our own Consciences accuse us for it, and convince us of it? that, being God's Deputy, would not accuse us of it, if the Sovereign Power by which it acts, did incline us to it: How can he be thought to excite to that which he hath enacted such severe Laws to restrain, or encline Man to that which he hath so dreadfully punished in his Son, and which it is impossible but the excellency of his Nature must encline him eternally to hate? We may sooner imagine that a pure Flame shall engender Cold, and Darkness be the Off-spring of a Sun-beam, as imagine such a thing as this. *What shall we say, is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.* The *Apostle* execrates such a thought; *Rom. 9. 14.*

6. *God cannot act any Evil, in or by himself.* If he cannot approve of sin in others, nor excite any to iniquity, which is less, he cannot commit Evil himself, which is greater: What he cannot positively will in another, can never be willed in himself; he cannot do evil through Ignorance, because of his Infinite Knowledge; nor through Weakness, because of his Infinite Power; nor through Malice, because of his Infinite Rectitude. He cannot will any unjust thing, because having an infinitely perfect Understanding, he cannot judge that to be true which is false; or that to be good, which is evil; his Will is regulated by his Wisdom: If he could will any unjust and irrational thing, his Will would be repugnant to his Understanding; there would be a disagreement in God, Will against Mind, and Will against Wisdom: He being the highest Reason, the first Truth, cannot do an unreasonable, false, defective Action. 'Tis not a defect in God that he cannot *do Evil*, but a fulness and excellency of Power: As it is not a weakness in the Light, but the perfection of it, that it is unable to produce Darkness: God is *the Father of Lights*, with whom is no *variableness*, *James 1. 17.* Nothing pleases him, nothing is acted by him, but what is befitting the Infinite excellency of his own Nature: The voluntary necessity whereby God cannot be unjust, renders him a *God blessed for ever*: He would hate himself as the chief Good, if in any of his Actions he should disagree with his Goodness. He cannot do any unworthy thing, not because he wants an Infinite Power, but because he is possessed of an Infinite Wisdom, and adorn'd with an Infinite Purity; and being infinitely pure, cannot have the least mixture of impurity. As if you can suppose Fire infinitely hot, you cannot suppose it to have the least mixture of Coldness: The better any thing is, the more unable it is to do evil: God being the only Goodness, can as little be changed in his Goodness, as in his Essence.

11. The Second thing.

2. The next enquiry is, *The Proof that God is holy, or the manifestation of it.* Purity is as requisite to the blessedness of God, as to the Being of God: As he could not be God without being blessed, so he could not be blessed without being holy. He is called by the title of *blessed*, as well as by that of *holy*, *Mark 14. 61. Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?* Unrighteousness is a misery and turbulency in any Spirit wherein it is: For it is a privation of an excellency which ought to be in every intellectual Being, and what can follow upon the privation of an excellency but inquietness and grief, the moth of Happiness? An unrighteous man, as an unrighteous man, can never be blessed, though he were in a local Heaven. Had God the least Spot upon his Purity, it would render him as miserable in the midst of his Infinite Sufficiency, as Iniquity



quity renders a man in the confluence of his earthly Enjoyments. The Holiness and Felicity of God are inseparable in him. The *Apostle* intimates that the Heathen made an attempt to fully his Blessedness, when they would liken him to corruptible, mutable, impure man; *Rom. 1. 23, 25. They changed the Glory of the Incorruptible God into an Image made like to Corruptible Man*: And after, he entitles God, a *God blessed for ever*. The Gospel is therefore called, *The glorious Gospel of the blessed God*, *1 Tim. 1. 11*. In regard of the holiness of the Gospel Precepts, and in regard of the Declaration of the holiness of God in all the Streams and Branches, wherein his Purity, in which his Blessedness consists, is as illustrious as any other Perfection of the Divine Being, God hath highly manifested this Attribute in the state of Nature; in the Legal Administration; in the dispensation of the Gospel. His Wisdom, Goodness, and Power are declared in Creation; his Sovereign Authority in his Law; his Grace and Mercy in the Gospel; and his Righteousness in all. Suitable to this *threefold* state, may be that ternal Repetition of his Holiness in the Prophecy, *Is. 6. 3. holy as Creator and Benefactor; holy as Law-giver and Judge; holy as Restorer and Redeemer*.

1. His holiness appears as he is Creator, in framing man in a perfect Uprightness. Angels, as made by God, could not be evil; for God beheld his own Works with pleasure, and could not have pronounced them all good, had some been created pure, and others impure: Two Moral Contrarieties could not be good. The Angels had a *first estate*, wherein they were happy\*; and had they\* *Jude 4.* not left their own habitation and state, they could not have been miserable. But because the *Scripture* speaks only of the Creation of man, we will consider, that the Humane Nature was well strung and tun'd by God, according to the Note of his own Holiness: *Eccl. 7. 29. God hath made man upright*: He had declared his Power in other Creatures, but would declare in his Rational Creature, what he most valued in himself; and therefore created him upright, with a Wisdom which is the rectitude of the Mind, with a Purity which is the rectitude of the Will and Affections. He had declared a purity in other Creatures, as much as they were capable of, *viz.* in the exact tuning them to answer one another. And that God, who so well tun'd and compos'd other Creatures, would not make Man a Jarring Instrument, and place a crackt Creature to be Lord of the rest of his earthly Fabrick. God being holy, could not set his Seal upon any Rational Creature, but the Impression would be like himself, pure and holy also: He could not be created with an Error in his Understanding; that had been inconsistent with the Goodness of God to his Rational Creature; if so, the erroneous motion of the Will, which was to follow the dictates of the Understanding, could not have been imputed to him as his Crime, because it would have been, not a voluntary, but a necessary effect of his Nature; had there been an error in the first Wheel, the error of the next could not have been imputed to the Nature of that, but to the irregular motion of the first Wheel in the Engine. The sin of Men and Angels proceeded not from any natural defect in their Understandings, but from Inconsideration: He that was the Author of Harmony in his other Creatures, could not be the Author of Disorder in the chief of his Works: Other Creatures were his Footsteps, but man was his Image†; *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness*:† *Gen. 1. 26, 27.* Which though it seems to imply no more in that place, than an Image of his Dominion over the Creatures, yet the *Apostle* raises it a peg higher, and gives us a larger Interpretation of it, *Col. 3. 10. And have put on the New-man, which is renewed in knowledge after the Image of him that created him*; making it to consist in a resemblance to his Righteousness. *Image*, say some, notes the form, as Man was a Spirit in regard of his Soul: *Likeness* notes the quality implanted in his Spiritual Nature: The Image of God was drawn in him, both as he was a Rational, and as he was a holy Creature. The Creatures manifested the being of a Superiour Power, as their Cause, but the Righteousness of the first Man evidenced, not only a Sovereign Power, as the Donor of his being; but a holy Power, as the Patern of his Work: God appeared to be a holy God in the Righteousness of his Creature, as well as an Understanding God in the Reason of his Creature, while he



formed him with all necessary knowledge in his Mind, and all necessary uprightness in his Will: The Law of Love to God, with his *whole soul, his whole mind, his whole heart and strength*, was originally writ upon his Nature: All the parts of his Nature were framed in a Moral Conformity with God, to answer this Law, and imitate God in his Purity, which consists in a love of himself, and his own Goodness and Excellency. Thus doth the clearness of the Stream point us to the purer Fountain, and the brightness of the Beam evidence a greater splendor in the Sun which shod it out.

2. *His Holiness appears in his Laws, as he is a Law-giver and a Judge.* Since Man was bound to be subject to God, as a Creature, and had a capacity to be ruled by the Law, as an understanding and willing Creature, God gave him a Law taken from the depths of his holy Nature, and suited to the Original Faculties of Man. The Rules which God hath fixed in the World, are not the Resolves of bare Will, but result particularly from the Goodness of his Nature: They are nothing else but the Transcripts of his Infinite detestation of sin, as he is the unblemished Governour of the World. This being the most adorable Property of his Nature, he hath impressed it upon that Law which he would have inviolably observed as a perpetual Rule for our Actions, that we may every moment think of this beautiful Perfection. God can command nothing, but what hath some similitude with the rectitude of his own Nature: All his Laws, every Paragraph of them therefore scent of this, and glitter with it. *Deut. 4. 8. What Nation hath Statutes and Judgments so righteous as all this Law I set before you this day?* and

\* *Psal. 19. 10.* therefore they are compar'd to *fine Gold* that hath no speck or dross\*.

This Purity is evident

1. *In the Moral Law, or Law of Nature.*
2. *In the Ceremonial Law.*
3. *In the Allurements annex't to it for keeping it, and the Affrightments to restrain from the breaking of it.*
4. *In the Judgments inflicted for the Violation of it.*

1. *In the Moral Law:* Which is therefore dignified with the title of *holy* twice in one Verse, *Rom. 7. 12. Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment is holy, just, and good:* It being the express Image of God's Will, as our Saviour was of his Person, and bearing a resemblance to the Purity of his Nature. The Tables of this Law were put into the Ark, that as the *Mercy Seat* was to represent the Grace of God, so the *Law* was to represent the *Holiness* of God†. The *Psalmist*, after he had spoken of the Glory of God in the Heavens, wherein the Power of God is exposed to our view, introduceth the Law, wherein the Purity of God is evidenc'd to our Minds ||; *perfect, pure, clean, righteous* are the titles given to it. 'Tis clearer in Holiness, than the Sun is in brightness; and more mighty in it self to command the Conscience, than the Sun is to run its Race. As the Holiness of the Scripture demonstrates the Divinity of its Author; so the Holiness of the Law doth the Purity of the Law-giver.

1. The purity of this *Law* is seen in the *Matter of it.* It prescribes all that becomes a Creature towards God, and all that becomes one Creature towards another of his own rank and kind. The Image of God is compleat in the Holiness of the *first Table*, and the Righteousness of the *second*; which is intimated by the *Apostle*, *Eph. 4. 24.* the one being the Rule of what we owe to God; the other being the Rule of what we owe to man: There is no good but it enjoyns, and no evil but it disowns. 'Tis not sickly and lame in any part of it; not a good action, but it gives it its due praise; and not an evil action, but it sets a condemning mark upon. The Commands of it are frequently in Scripture call'd *Judgments*, because they rightly judge of good and evil, and are a clear light to inform the Judgment of Man in the knowledge of both. By this was the Understanding of *David* enlightned to know every *false way*, and to *hate it* \*. There is no Case can happen, but may meet with a determination from it; It teaches men the noblest manner of living, a life like God himself; honourably for the Law-giver, and joyfully for the subject. It directs us to the highest End; sets us at a distance from all base and sordid Practices; it proposeth Light to the Understanding, and Good-

† *Psal. 19. 1.*

|| *Verf. 7. 9. 8. c.*

\* *Psal. 119. c. 4.*



Goodness to the Will. It would Tune all the Strings, set right all the Orders of Mankind: It censures the least Mote, countenanceth not any stain in the Life. Not a *wanton Glance* can meet with any justification from it\*: not a *rash Anger*, \* *Mat. 5. 28.* but it frowns upon†. As the Law-giver wants nothing, as an Addition to his Blessedness; so his Law wants nothing as a Supplement to its *perfection*, Deut. 4. 2. What our *Saviour* seems to add, is not an Addition to mend any defects; but a restoration of it from the corrupt Glosses, wherewith the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* had eclips'd the brightness of it: They had curtail'd it, and diminish'd part of its Authority, cutting off its empire over the least Evil, and left its power only to check the grosser Practices. But *Christ* restores it to the due extent of its Sovereignty, and shews it in those dimensions in which the Holy Men of God considered it, as *exceeding broad*, Psal. 119. 96. reaching to all Actions, all Motions, all Circumstances attending them; full of inexhaustible Treasures of Righteousness. And though this Law, since the *Fall*, doth irritate Sin, 'tis no disparagement, but a Testimony to the Righteousness of it; which the *Apostle* manifests by his *Wherefore*, Rom. 7. 3. *Sin taking occasion by the Commandment, wrought in me all manner of Concupiscence*; and repeating the same sense *verse 11.* subjoyns a *Wherefore*, *verse 12.* *Wherefore the Law is holy.* The rising of Mens sinful hearts against the Law of God, when it strikes with its Preceptive and Minatory parts upon their Consciences, evidenceth the Holiness of the Law and the Law-giver.

In its own Nature it is a Directing Rule, but the malignant Nature of Sin is exasperated by it; as an hostile quality in a Creature, will awaken it self at the appearance of its Enemy. The Purity of this Beam, and Transcript of God, bears witness to a greater clearness and beauty in the *Sun* and Original. Undeiled Streams manifest an untainted Fountain.

2. It is seen in the manner of its Precepts. As it prescribes all Good, and forbids all Evil; so it doth enjoyn the one, and banish the other as such. The Laws of Men command Vertuous things; not as Vertuous in themselves, but as useful for Human Society; which the Magistrate is the Conservator of, and the *Guardian of Justice* ||. The Laws of Men contain not all the Precepts of Vertue, but only such as are accommodated to their Customs, and are useful to preserve the Ligaments of their Government. The design of them is not so much to render the Subjects good Men, as good Citizens: They order the Practice of those Vertues that may strengthen Civil Society, and discountenance those Vices only which weaken the Sinews of it: But God, being the *Guardian of Universal Righteousness*, doth not only enact the Observance of all *Righteousness*, but the observance of it as *Righteousness*. He Commands that which is Just in it self; enjoys *Vertues* as *Vertues*, and prohibits *Vices* as *Vices*; as they are profitable or injurious to our selves, as well as to Others.

|| *Amos, 3. 7.*  
*Contra. 1. 10.*  
*cap. 1. 2. 3.*

Men command Temperance and Justice; not as *Vertues* in themselves, but as they prevent Disorder and Confusion in a *Common Wealth*: And forbid Adultery and Theft; not as *Vices* in themselves, but as they are *Intrenchments* upon Property; Not as hurtful to the Person that commits them, but as hurtful to the Person against whose Right they are committed. Upon this account perhaps *Paul* applauds the *Holiness* of the Law of God in regard of its own Nature, as considered in it self, more than he doth the Justice of it in regard of Man, and the goodness and conveniency of it to the World; *Rom. 7. 12.* the Law is *Holy* twice, and *Just and Good* but once.

3. In the Spiritual extent of it. The most *Righteous Powers* of the World, do not so much regard in their Laws what the *Inward Affections* of their Subjects are: The *External Acts* are only the Objects of their Decrees, either to encourage them if they be useful, or discourage them if they be hurtful to the Community. And indeed they can do no other, for they have no Power proportioned to Inward Affections, since the Inward disposition falls not under their Censure; and it would be foolish for any Legislative Power to make such Laws, which it is impossible for it to put in Execution. They can prohibit the Outward Acts of Theft and Murder, but they cannot command the *Love of God*, the *Hatred of Sin*, the *Contempt of the World*; they cannot prohibit *Unclean Thoughts*, and the



the *Atheism* of the Heart. But the Law of God surmounts in *Righteousness* all the Laws of the best regulated *Common Wealths* in the World: It restrains the Licentious Heart, as well as the Violent Hand; it damps the very first bubblings of Corrupt Nature, orders a Purity in the Spring; commands a clean Fountain, clean Streams, clean Vessels. It would frame the Heart to an Inward, as well as the Life to an Outward Righteousness, and make the Inside purer than the Outside. It forbids the first Belchings of a Murderous or Adulterous intention: It obligeth Man as a Rational Creature, and therefore exacts a conformity of every Rational Faculty, and of whatsoever is under the Command of them. It commands the Private Closet to be free from the least Cobweb, as well as the Outward Porch to be clean from Mire and Dirt. It frowns upon all stains and pollutions of the most retired Thoughts: Hence the *Apostle* calls it a *Spiritual Law*, Rom. 7. 14. as not Political, but extending its force further than the Frontiers of the Man; placing its Ensigns in the *Metropolis* of the Heart and Mind, and curbing with its Scepter the Inward motions of the Spirit, and commanding over the Secrets of every Mans Breast.

4. In regard of the *perpetuity* of it. The Purity and perpetuity of it are link'd together by the *Psalmist*, Psal. 19. 9. *The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever*; the Fear of the Lord, that is, that Law which commands the Fear and Worship of God, and is the Rule of it. And indeed God values it at such a rate, that rather than part with a tittle, or let the honour of it lie in the Dust, he would not only let *Heaven and Earth pass away*, but expose his Son to death for the reparation of the wrong it had sustain'd. So holy it is, that the *Holiness* and *Righteousness* of God cannot dispence with it, cannot abrogate it, without despoiling himself of his own Being: 'Tis a Copy of the Eternal Law. Can he ever abrogate the command of Love to himself, without shewing some contempt of his own Excellency and very Being? Before he can enjoin a Creature not to love him, he must make himself unworthy of Love, and worthy of Hatred; this would be the highest *Unrighteousness*, to order us to hate that which is only worthy of our highest Affections. † So God cannot change the first Command, and order us to worship *many Gods*; this would be against the Excellency and Unity of God: For God cannot constitute another God, or make any thing worthy of an Honour equal with himself. Those things that are good, only because they are Commanded, are alterable by God: Those things that are intrinsically and essentially Good, and therefore Commanded, are unalterable as long as the *Holiness* and *Righteousness* of God stand firm. The intrinsic Goodness of the Moral Law, the concern God hath for it; the perpetuity of the Precepts of the *first Table*, and the care he hath had to imprint the Precepts of the *Second* upon the Minds and Consciences of Men, as the Author of Nature for the preservation of the World; manifests the *Holiness* of the Law-maker and Governour.

2. His *Holiness* appears in the *Ceremonial Law*. In the variety of Sacrifices for Sin, wherein he writ his detestation of *Unrighteousness* in bloody Characters. His *Holiness* was more constantly exprest in the continual Sacrifices, than in those rarer sprinklings of Judgments now and then upon the World; which often reached not the worst, but the most moderate Sinners, and were the occasions of the questioning of the Righteousness of his Providence both by *Jews* and *Gentiles*. In Judgments his Purity was only now and then manifest: By his long Patience, he might be imagin'd by some reconcil'd to their Crimes, or not much concern'd in them; but by the Morning and Evening Sacrifice he witness'd a perpetual and uninterrupted Abhorrence of whatsoever was Evil.

Besides those, the occasional Washings and Sprinklings upon *Ceremonial Defilements*, which polluted only the Body, gave an evidence, that every thing that had a resemblance to Evil, was loathsome to him. Add also the Prohibitions of eating such and such Creatures that were filthy; as the *Swine* that wallowed in the Mire, a fit Emblem for the prophane and brutish Sinner; which had a Moral signification, both of the loathsomeness of Sin to God, and the aversion themselves ought to have to every thing that was filthy.



3. This *Holiness* appears in the *Allurements annex'd to the Law for keeping it; and the Affrightments to restrain from the breaking of it.* Both Promises and Threatnings have their Fundamental Root in the *Holiness of God*, and are both Branches of this peculiar Perfection. As they respect the Nature of God, they are Declarations of his hatred of Sin, and his love of Righteousness; the one belong to his Threatnings, the other to his Promises; both join together to represent this Divine Perfection to the Creature, and to excite to an imitation in the Creature. In the one God would render Sin odious, because dangerous; and curb the practice of Evil, which would otherwise be Licentious: In the other, he would commend *Righteousness*, and excite a love of it, which would otherwise be cold. By these God sutes the two great Affections of Men, *Fear* and *Hope*; both the branches of Self-love in Man: The *Promises* and *Threatnings* are both the Branches of Holiness in God. The end of the Promises is the same with the Exhortation the *Apostle* concludes from them, *2 Cor. 7. 1. Having these Promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of God.* As the end of Precepts, is to direct; the end of Threatnings, is to deter from Iniquity; so that of the Promises, is to allure to Obedience. Thus God breaths out his Love to *Righteousness* in every Promise, his Hatred of Sin in every Threatning. The Rewards offer'd in the one, are the Smiles of *pleased Holiness*; and the Curses thundred in the other, are the Sparklings of *enraged Righteousness*.

4. His *Holiness* appears in the *Judgments inflicted for the violation of this Law.* Divine Holiness is the Root of Divine Justice, and Divine Justice is the Triumph of Divine Holiness. Hence both are expressed in Scripture by one word of *Righteousness*, which sometimes signifies the rectitude of the Divine Nature, and sometimes the vindicative stroke of his Arm; *Psal. 103. 6. The Lord executeth Righteousness and Judgment for all that are oppressed.* So *Dan. 9. 7. Righteousness (that is, Justice) belongs to thee.* The Vials of his Wrath are filled from his implacable aversion to Iniquity. All Penal Evils showed down upon the heads of Wicked men, spread their root in, and branch out from this Perfection. All the dreadful Storms and Tempests in the World are blown up by it. Why doth he *rain Snares, Fire and Brimstone, and a horrible Tempest*? because *the righteous Lord loveth Righteousness*, *Psal. 11. 6, 7.* And (as was observed before) when he was going about the dreadfullest Work that ever was in the World; the overturning the *Jewish State*, hardening the Hearts of that Unbelieving People, and cashiering a Nation (once dear to him) from the honour of his Protection; His *Holiness*, as the Spring of all this, is applauded by the *Seraphims*, *Isai. 6. 3.* compared with *Verf. 9, 10, 11, &c.* Impunity argues the approbation of a Crime, and Punishment the abhorrency of it. The greatness of the Crime, and the Righteousness of the Judge, are the first Natural Sentiments that arise in the Minds of Men upon the appearance of Divine Judgments in the World, by those that are near them †. As when Men see Gibbets erected, Scaffolds prepared, Instruments of Death and Torture provided, and grievous Punishments inflicted; the first reflection in the Spectators, is the malignity of the Crime, and the detestation the Governours are possessed with.

† *Amiran.  
Moral. Tom. 3.  
p. 322.*

1. *How severely hath he punish'd his most Noble Creatures for it?* The once glorious Angels, upon whom he had been at greater cost than upon other Creatures, and drawn more lively Lineaments of his own Excellency, upon the Transgression of his Law, are thrown into the Furnace of Justice without any *Mercy* to pity them, *Jude 6.* And though there were but one sort of Creatures upon the Earth that bore his Image, and were only fit to publish and keep up his Honour below the Heavens; yet upon their Apostacy (though upon a Temptation from a subtle and insinuating Spirit) the *Man*, with all his Posterity, is sentenc'd to Misery in Life, and Death at last; and the *Woman*, with all her Sex, have standing Punishments inflicted on them; which as they begun in their Persons, were to reach as far as the last Member of their successive Generations. So *Holy* is God, that he will not endure a Spot in his choicest Work. Men indeed, when there is a crack in an excellent piece of Work, or a stain upon a rich Garment, do not cast it away; they value it for the remaining Excellency, more than hate it for the contracted



contracted Spot : But God saw no Excellency in his Creature worthy regarding, after the Image of that which he most esteemed in himself, was detected.

2. *How detestable to him are the very Instruments of Sin?* For the Ill use, the *Serpent* (an Irrational Creature,) was put to by the *Devil*, as an Instrument in the *Fall of Man*, the whole brood of those Animals are Curs'd, *Gen. 3. 14. Cursed above all Cattle, and above every Beast of the field.* Not only the *Devil's Head* is threatned to be for ever *bruised*, and (as some think) render'd irrecoverable upon this further Testimony of his Malice in the Seduction of Man; who perhaps without this new Act, might have been admitted into the Arms of Mercy, notwithstanding his first Sin; [though the *Scripture* gives us no account of this, only this is the only Sentence we read of pronounc'd against the *Devil*, which puts him into an irrecoverable state by a Mortal bruising of his *Head*.] But, I say, He is not only punish'd, but the Organ whereby he blew in his Temptation, is put into a worse condition than it was before. Thus God hated the Spunge, whereby the *Devil* deform'd his beautiful Image : Thus God, to manifest his detestation of Sin, ordered the *Beast* whereby any Man was slain, to be slain as well as the Malefactor, *Levit. 20. 15.* The *Gold* and *Silver* that had been abused to Idolatry, and were the Ornaments of Images; though good in themselves, and incapable of a Criminal Nature, were not to be brought into their Houses, but detested and abhorred by them, because they were curs'd, and an *abomination to the Lord*. See with what loathing Expressions this Law is enjoin'd to them, *Deut. 7. 25, 26.* So contrary is the holy Nature of God to every Sin, that it curseth every thing that is Instrumental in it.

3. *How detestable is every thing to him that is in the Sinners possession?* The very Earth, which God had made *Adam* the Proprietor of, was *Cursed for his sake*, *Gen. 3. 17, 18.* It lost its Beauty, and lies languishing to this day; and notwithstanding the Redemption by Christ, hath not recovered its health, nor is it like to do, till the compleating the Fruits of it upon the *Children of God*, *Rom. 8. 20, 21, 22.* The whole Lower Creation was made *subject to Vanity*, and put into Pangs upon the Sin of Man, by the *Righteousness* of God detesting his Offence. How often hath his implacable Aversion from Sin been shewn; not only in his Judgments upon the Offenders Person, but by wrapping up in the same Judgment those which stood in a near relation to them? *Achan*, with his Children and Cattle, are overwhelmed with *Stones*, and burned together, *Josh. 7. 24, 25.* In the destruction of *Sodom*; not only the grown Malefactors, but the young Spawn, the Infants (at present incapable of the same Wickedness) and their Cattle were burned up by the same *Fire from Heaven*; and the Place where their Habitations stood, is at this day, partly a heap of *Albes*, and partly an Infectious *Lake*, that choaks any Fish that swim into it from *Jordan*, and stifles (as is related) by its Vapor any Bird that attempts to fly over it. Oh, how detestable is *Sin* to God, that causes him to turn a pleasant Land, as the *Garden of the Lord* (as it is styled *Gen. 13. 10.*) into a Lake of Sulphur; to make it both in his Word and Works, as a lasting Monument of his abhorrence of Evil!

4. *What design hath God in all these Acts of Severity and Vindictive Justice, but to set off the lustre of his Holiness?* He testifies himself concerned for those Laws, which he hath set as Hedges and Limits to the *Lusts* of Men; and therefore when he breaths forth his fiery Indignation against a People, he is said to get himself *Honour*: As when he intended the *Red Sea* should swallow up the *Egyptian Army*, *Exod. 14. 17, 18.* which *Moses* in his Triumphant Song Echoes back again, *Exod. 15. 1. Thou hast triumphed gloriously*; gloriously in his *Holiness*, which is the glory of his Nature; as *Moses* himself interprets it in the *Text*. When Men will not own the *Holiness* of God in a way of Duty, God will vindicate it in a way of Justice and Punishment. In the destruction of *Aarons Sons*, that were Will-worshippers, and would take Strange Fire, *Sanctified* and *Glorified* are coupled, *Lev. 10. 3.* He glorified himself in that Act, in vindicating his *Holiness* before all the People, declaring, that he will not endure Sin and Disobedience. He doth therefore in this Life more severely punish the Sins of his People, when they presume upon any act of Disobedience; for a Testimony, that the nearness



and dearness of any Person to him, shall not make him unconcern'd in his *Holiness*, or be a plea for Impurity. The End of all his Judgments, is to witness to the World his Abominating of Sin. To Punish and Witness against Men, are one and the same thing, *Micah 1.2. The Lord shall witness against you*; and it is the Witness of Gods *Holiness*, *Hos. 5.5. And the Pride of Israel doth testify to his face*: One renders it, the *Excellency of Israel*, and understands it of God; the word [18] which is here in our Translation *Pride*, is rendred *Excellency*, *Amos 8.7. The Lord God hath sworn by his Excellency*; which is Interpreted *Holiness*, *Amos 4.2. The Lord God hath sworn by his Holiness*. What is the issue or end of this Swearing by *Holiness*, and of his *Excellency* testifying against them? In all those Places you will find them to be sweeping Judgments: In one, *Israel and Ephraim shall fall in their Iniquity*; in another, He will *take them away with Hooks, and their Posterity with Fish-hooks*, and in another, He would *never forget any of their works*. He that punisheth Wickedness in those he before used with the greatest Tenderness, furnisheth the World with an undeniable Evidence of the Detestableness of it to him. Were not Judgments sometimes poured out upon the World, it would be believed, that God were rather an Approver, than an Enemy to Sin.

To Conclude, Since God hath made a stricter Law to guide Men; annex'd Promises above the merit of Obedience, to allure them; and Threatnings, dreadful enough to affright Men from Disobedience. He cannot be the Cause of Sin, nor a lover of it. How can he be the Author of that which he so severely forbids; or love that which he delights to punish; or be fondly Indulgent to any Evil, when he hates the Ignorant Instruments in the Offences of his Reasonable Creatures?

III. The *Holiness* of God, appears in Our Restoration. 'Tis in the Glass of the Gospel we behold the *Glory of the Lord*\*, that is, the Glory of the Lord, into \* 2 Cor. 3. 19. whose Image we are changed; but we are changed into nothing, as the Image of God, but into *Holiness*: We bore not upon us by Creation, nor by Regeneration, the Image of any other Perfection: We cannot be changed into his *Omnipotence*, *Omniscience*, &c. but into the Image of his *Righteousness*. This is the pleasing and glorious sight the Gospel Mirror darts in our eyes. The whole Scene of Redemption, is nothing else but a discovery of Judgment and Righteousness, *Isai. 1. 27. Zion shall be redeemed with Judgment, and her Converts with Righteousness*.

1. This *Holiness* of God, appears in the manner of our Restoration, viz. by the Death of Christ. Not all the Vials of Judgments, that have, or shall be poured out upon the wicked World, nor the flaming Furnace of a Sinners Conscience, nor the Irreversible Sentence pronounc'd against the Rebellious Devils, nor the Groans of the Damned Creatures, give such a demonstration of Gods Hatred of Sin, as the Wrath of God let loose upon his Son. Never did Divine *Holiness* appear more beautiful and lovely, than at the time our Saviours Countenance was most marr'd in the midst of his Dying Groans. This himself acknowledges in that Prophetical Psalm, *Psal. 22. 1, 2.* when God had turned his Smiling Face from him, and thrust his sharp Knife into his heart, which forced that Terrible cry from him, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* he adores this Perfection of *Holiness*, v. 3. *But thou art holy*: Thy *Holiness* is the Spring of all this sharp Agony, and for this thou *Inhabitest*, and shalt for ever inhabit the Praises of all thy *Israel*. *Holiness* drew the Vail between Gods Countenance and our Saviours Soul. Justice indeed gave the stroke, but *Holiness* order'd it. In this his Purity did sparkle, and his Irreversible Justice manifested, that all those that commit Sin are worthy of death; this was the perfect Index of his *Righteousness*†, that is, of his *Holiness* and Truth; † Rom. 7. 12. then it was that God that is Holy, was sanctified in Righteousness, *Isai. 5. 16.*

It appears the more, if you consider,

1. The Dignity of the Redeemers Person. One that had been from Eternity; had laid the Foundations of the World; had been the Object of the Divine Delight: He that was God blessed for ever, becomes a Curse: He who was blessed by Angels, and by whom God blessed the World, must be seiz'd with Horrour: The Son of Eternity must bleed to death. Where did ever Sin appear so irreconcilable to God? Where did God ever break out so furiously in his detestation of Iniquity? The Father would have the most Excellent Person, one next in order to him-



\* Phil 2. 6.

self, and *Equal to him* in all the glorious Perfections of his Nature \*, Die on a Disgraceful Cross, and be exposed to the flames of Divine Wrath, rather than Sin should live, and his *Holiness* remain for ever disparaged by the Violations of his Law.

† Lingenl.  
Jon. 3. p. 599,  
700.

2. *The near Relation he stood in to the Father.* He was his own Son that he delivered up, Rom. 8. 32. His Essential Image, as dearly beloved by him as himself; yet he would abate nothing of his Hatred of those Sins imputed to one so dear to him, and who never had done any thing contrary to his Will. The strong Cries utter'd by him, could not cause him to cut off the least Fringe of this Royal Garment, nor part with a Thread, the Robe of his *Holiness* was woven with. The Torrent of *Wrath* is open'd upon him, and the Fathers Heart beats not in the least notice of Tenderneſs to Sin, in the midst of his Sons Agonies. † God seems to lay aside the Bowels of a Father, and put on the garb of an Irreconcilable Enemy. Upon which account, probably, our Saviour in the midst of his Passion gives him the Title of *God*; not of *Father*, the Title he usually before Address'd to him with. *Math. 27. 46. My God, my God*; not, *My Father, my Father*; why hast thou forsaken me? He seems to hang upon the Cross like a disinherited Son, while he appear'd in the garb and rank of a Sinner. Then was his Head loaded with Curses, when he stood under that Sentence of *Cursed is every one that hangs upon a Tree*, Gal. 3. 13. and look'd as one forlorn and rejected by the Divine Purity and Tenderneſs. God dealt not with him, as if he had been one in so near a Relation to him. He left him not to the Will only of the Instruments of his Death, he would have the chiefest blow himself of bruising of him, *Isai. 53. 10. It pleased the Lord to bruise him*: the Lord, because the power of Creatures could not strike a blow strong enough, to satisfy and secure the Rights of Infinite *Holiness*. It was therefore a Cup temper'd and put into his hands by his Father; a Cup given him to drink. In other Judgments he lets out his Wrath against his Creature; in this he lets out his Wrath (as it were) against Himself, against his Son, One as dear to him as himself. As in his making Creatures, his Power over Nothing to bring it into Being appear'd; but in pardoning Sin he hath power over himself; so in punishing Creatures, his *Holiness* appears in his Wrath against Creatures, against Sinners by inherency: But by punishing Sin in his Son, his *Holiness* sharpens his Wrath against him who was his Equal, and only a reputed Sinner: As if his Affection to his own *Holiness*, surmounted his Affection to his Son: For he chose to suspend the breakings out of his Affections to his Son, and see him plunged in a sharp and Ignominious Misery, without giving him any visible Token of his Love; rather than see his *Holiness* lie groaning under the Injuries of a Transgressing World.

3. The Value he puts upon his *Holiness*, appears further, in the Advancement of this Redeeming Person, after his Death. Our Saviour was Advanc'd, not barely for his Dying, but for the respect he had in his Death to this Attribute of God. *Heb. 1. 9. Thou hast loved Righteousness, and hated Iniquity: therefore God, even thy God, hath Anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness, &c.* By Righteousness is meant this Perfection, because of the opposition of it to Iniquity. Some think [Therefore] to be the final Cause; as if this were the sense, *Thou art anointed with the Oil of Gladness, that thou mightest love Righteousness, and hate Iniquity*. But the Holy Ghost seeming to speak in this Chapter, not only of the Godhead of Christ, but of his Exaltation; the Doctrine whereof he had begun in Verse 3. and prosecutes in the following Verses; I would rather understand [Therefore,] *For this cause, or reason, hath God anointed thee*; not, *to this end*. Christ indeed had an Unction of Grace, whereby he was fitted for his Mediatory Work; He had also an Unction of Glory, whereby he was rewarded for it. In the first regard, it was a qualifying him for his Office; in the second regard, it was a solemn Inaugurating him in his Royal Authority. And the Reason of his being settled upon a Throne for ever and ever, is, *because he loved Righteousness*. He suffered himself to be pierced to Death, that Sin, the Enemy of Gods Purity, might be destroy'd; and the Honour of the Law, the Image of Gods *Holiness*, might be repair'd and fulfilled in the Fallen Creature. He restored the Credit of Divine *Holiness* in the World, in manifesting, by his Death, God an irreconcilable Enemy to all Sin; in abolishing the Empire of Sin, so hateful to God, and restoring the rectitude of Nature, and new framing the Image of God in his chosen Ones. And



And God so valued this Vindication of his *Holiness*, that he confers upon him, in his Humane Nature, an Eternal Royalty and Empire over Angels and Men. *Holiness* was the great Attribute respected by Christ in his dying, and manifested in his Death; and for his Love to this God would bestow an Honour upon his Person, in that Nature wherein he did vindicate the Honour of so dear a Perfection. In the Death of Christ, he shewed his Resolution to preserve its Rights. In the Exaltation of Christ, he evidenced his mighty pleasure for the Vindication of it. In both the Infinite value he had for it, as dear to him as his Life and Glory.

4. It may be further considered, that *in this way of Redemption, his Holiness in the hatred of Sin, seems to be valued above any other Attribute.* He proclaims the value of it above the Person of his Son; since the Divine Nature of the Redeemer is disguised, obscur'd and veil'd, in order to the restoring the Honour of it. And Christ seems to value it above his own Person, since he submitted himself to the Reproaches of Men, to clear this Perfection of the Divine Nature, and make it illustrious in the eyes of the World. You heard before, at the beginning of the handling this Argument; It was the Beauty of the Deity, the Lustre of his Nature, the Link of all his Attributes, his very Life; he values it equal with Himself, since he swears by it, as well as by his Life. And none of his Attributes would have a due *Decorum* without it: 'Tis the glory of Power, Mercy, Justice, Wisdom, that they are all Holy. So that though God had an Infinite tenderness and compassion to the Fallen Creature, yet it should not extend it self in his relief to the prejudice of the Rights of his Purity: He would have this triumph in the Tenderness of his Mercy, as well as the Severities of his Justice. His Mercy had not appeared in its true colours, nor attain'd a regular End, without Vengeance on Sin. It would have been a Compassion, that would (in sparing the Sinner) have encourag'd the Sin, and affronted *Holiness* in the Issues of it: Had he dispersed his Compassions about the World without the regard to his Hatred of Sin, his Mercy had been too cheap, and his Holiness had been contemn'd. His Mercy would not have Triumph'd in his own Nature, whilst his Holiness had suffered: He had exercised a Mercy with the impairing his own Glory.

But now in this way of Redemption, the Rights of both are secured, both have their due lustre: The Odiousness of Sin is equally discovered with the greatest of his Compassions; an Infinite Abhorrence of Sin, and an Infinite Love to the World march hand in hand together: Never was so much of the Irreconcilableness of Sin to him, set forth, as in the moment he was opening his Bowels in the Reconciliation of the Sinner. Sin is made the chiefest Mark of his Displeasure, while the Poor Creature is made the highest Object of Divine Pity. There could have been no motion of Mercy, with the least Injury to Purity and Holiness. In this way *Mercy and Truth, Mercy to the Misery of the Creature, and Truth to the Purity of the Law, have met together; the Righteousness of God, and the Peace of the Sinner, have kissed each other, Psal. 85. 10.*

II. The *Holiness* of God in his Hatred of Sin, appears in our *Justification*, and the Conditions he requires of all that would enjoy the benefit of Redemption. His Wisdom hath so temper'd all the Conditions of it, that the Honour of his *Holiness* is as much preserved, as the Sweetness of his *Mercy* is experimented by us. All the Conditions are Records of his exact Purity, as well as of his condescending Grace. Our *Justification* is not by the Imperfect works of Creatures, but by an exact and Infinite Righteousness, as great as that of the Deity, which had been Offended: It being the *Righteousness* of a Divine Person, upon which account it is call'd the *Righteousness of God*; not only in regard of Gods appointing it, and Gods accepting it, but as it is a *Righteousness* of that Person that was God, and is God. Faith is the Condition God requires to Justification; but not a dead, but an active Faith, such a *Faith as purifies the heart* †. He calls for *Repentance*, which is a Moral retracting our Offences, and an approbation of condemn'd Righteousness and a violated Law; an endeavour to regain what is lost, and to pluck out the heart of that Sin we have committed. He requires *Mortification*, which is called *Crucifying*; whereby a Man would strike as full and deadly a blow at his Lusts, as was struck at Christ upon the Cross, and make them as certainly die, as the Redeemer did.



Our own Righteousness must be condemned by us, as impure and imperfect: We must disown every thing that is our own, as to Righteousness, in reverence to the Holiness of God, and the valuation of the Righteousness of Christ. He hath resolved, not to bestow the Inheritance of Glory, without the Root of Grace. None are partakers of the Divine Blessedness, that are not partakers of the Divine Nature: There must be a *renewing* of his Image, before there be a *vision of his face*\*. He will not have Men brought only into a Relative state of Happiness by Justification, without a Real state of Grace by Sanctification. And so resolved he is in it, that there is no admittance into Heaven of a flaring, but a persevering Holiness; *Rom. 2. 7. a patient continuance in well doing*. A Patient under the sharpness of Affliction, and continuing under the Pleasures of Prosperity. Hence it is that the Gospel, the restoring Doctrine, hath not only the motives of Rewards to allure us to Good, and the danger of Punishments to scare us from Evil, as the Law had; but they are set forth in a higher strain, in a way of stronger engagement, the Rewards are Heavenly, and the Punishments Eternal: And more powerful Motives besides, from the choicer Expressions of Gods Love in the Death of his Son. The whole Design of it is to re-instate us in a resemblance to this Divine Perfection; whereby he shews what an Affection he hath to this Excellency of his Nature, and what a detestation he hath of Evil, which is contrary to it.

3. It appears in the actual Regeneration of the Redeemed Souls, and a carrying it on to a full perfection. As Election is the effect of Gods Sovereignty, our Pardon the fruit of his Mercy, our Knowledge a stream from his Wisdom, our Strength an impression of his Power; so our Purity is a beam from his Holiness. The whole work of Sanctification, and the preservation of it, our Saviour begs for his Disciples of his Father, under this Title, *John 17. 11, 17. Holy Father, keep them through thy own name, and sanctify them through thy Truth*; as the proper Source whence Holiness was to flow to the Creature: As the Sun is the proper Fountain whence Light is derived, both to the Stars above, and Bodies here below. Whence He is not only called Holy, but the *Holy One of Israel*, *Isai. 43. 15. I am the Lord your Holy One, the Creator of Israel*: Displaying his Holiness in them, by a new Creation of them as his *Israel*. As the rectitude of the Creature at the first Creation was the effect of his Holiness; so the Purity of the Creature, by a New Creation, is a draught of the same Perfection. He is called the *Holy One of Israel* more in *Isaiab*, that Evangelical Prophet, in erecting *Zion*, and forming a People for himself, than in the whole Scripture besides. As he sent *Jesus Christ* to satisfy his Justice for the expiation of the Guilt of Sin; so he sends the *Holy Ghost* for the cleansing the filth of Sin, and overmastering the power of it: Himself is the Fountain, the Son is the Patern, and the Holy Ghost the immediate Imprinter of this stamp of Holiness upon the Creature. God hath such a value for this Attribute, that he designs the glory of this in the renewing the Creature, more than the happiness of the Creature; though the one doth necessarily follow upon the other, yet the one is the principal Design, and the other the consequent of the former: Whence our Salvation is more frequently set forth, in Scripture, by a Redemption from Sin, and Sanctification of the Soul, than by a Possession of Heaven†.

† *Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13, 14, and many other places.*

Indeed, as God could not create a Rational Creature, without interesting this Attribute in a special manner; so he cannot restore the Fallen Creature without it. As in creating a Rational Creature, there must be *Holiness* to adorn it, as well as *Wisdom* to form the design, and *Power* to effect it; so in the restoration of the Creature, as he could not make a Reasonable Creature unholy; so he cannot restore a Fallen Creature, and put him in a meet posture to take pleasure in him, without communicating to him a resemblance of himself. As God cannot be Blessed in himself without this Perfection of *Purity*; so neither can a Creature be Blessed without it. As God would be Unlovely to himself without this Attribute; so would the Creature be unlovely to God, without a stamp and mark of it upon his Nature. So much is this Perfection one with God, valued by him, and interested in all his Works and Ways.

The



The third Thing I am to do, is to lay down some Propositions in the defence of God's holiness in all his acts, about or concerning sin. It was a prudent and pious advice of *Cimero*, Not to be too busie and rash in Inquiries and Conclusions about the reason of God's Providence in the matter of sin. The Scripture hath put a bar in the way of such Curiosity, by telling us, that the ways of God's Wisdom and Righteousness in his Judgments are *unsearchable*\*: Much more the ways of God's Holiness, as he stands in relation to Sin, as a Governour of the World; we cannot consider those things without danger of slipping: Our Eyes are too weak to look upon the *Sun* without being dazzled: Too much Curiosity met with a just check in our first Parent. To be desirous to know the reason of all God's proceedings in the matter of Sin, is to second the Ambition of *Adam*, to be as wise as God, and know the reason of his actings equally with himself. 'Tis more easie, as the same *Author* saith, to give an Account of God's Providence since the Revolt of Man, and the Poyson that hath universally seiz'd upon Human Nature, than to make guesles at the manner of the fall of the first Man. The Scripture hath given us but a short Account of the manner of it, to discourage too curious Inquiries into it.

'Tis certain that God made Man *upright*; and when Man sinned in *Paradise*, God was active in sustaining the substantial nature and act of the Sinner while he was sinning, though not in supporting the sinfulness of the Act: He was permissive in suffering it: He was Negative in withholding that Grace which might certainly have prevented his Crime, and consequently his Ruin; though he withheld nothing that was sufficient for his Resistance of that Temptation wherewith he was assaulted. And since the Fall of Man, God as a wise Governour is directive of the Events of the Transgression, and draws the choicest Good out of the blackest Evil, and limits the sins of men, that they creep not so far as the evil Nature of men would urge them to; and as a righteous Judge, he takes away the talent from idle Servants, and the Light from wicked ones, whereby they stumble and fall into Crimes, by the inclinations and proneness of their own corrupt Natures, leaves them to the Byas of their own vicious habits, denies that grace which they have forfeited, and have no right to challenge; and turns their sinful actions into punishments, both to the Committers of them, and others.

1. Proposition. *God's holiness is not chargeable with any blemish for his creating man in a mutable state.* 'Tis true, Angels and Men were created with a changeable Nature; and though there was a rich and glorious stamp upon them by the Hand of God, yet their Natures were not incapable of a base and vile Stamp from some other Principle. As the Silver which bears upon it the Image of a great Prince, is capable of being melted down, and imprinted with no better an Image than that of some vile and monstrous Beast. Though God made Man *upright*, yet he was capable of seeking many inventions, *Eccl. 7. 29.* yet the hand of God was not defiled by forming Man with such a Nature. It was futable to the Wisdom of God to give the Rational Creature, whom he had furnisht with a power of acting righteously, the liberty of choice, and not fix him in an unchangeable state without a trial of him in his Natural; that if he did obey, his obedience might be the more valuable; and if he did freely offend, his offence might be more inexcusable.

1. No Creature can be capable of immutability by Nature. Mutability is so essential to a Creature, that a Creature cannot be supposed without it: You must suppose it a Creator, not a Creature, if you allow it to be of an Immutable Nature. Immutability is the property of the Supream Being. God only hath immortality, *1 Tim. 6. 16.* Immortality, as opposed not only to a natural, but to a sinful death; the word *only* appropriates every sort of Immortality to God, and excludes every Creature, whether Angel or Man, from a Partnership with God in this by Nature. Every Creature therefore is capable of a Death in sin. None is good but God, and none is naturally free from change but God; which excludes every Creature from the same Prerogative; and certainly if one Angel sinned, all might have sinned, because there was the same root of Mutability in one as well

III.

\* Rom 11. 33.



as another. 'Tis as possible for a Creature to be Creator, as for a Creature to have naturally an incommunicable property of the Creator. All things, whether Angels or Men, are made of nothing, and therefore capable of defection\*; because a Creature being made of nothing, cannot be good *per se*, or essentially good, but by *participation* from another. Again, every Rational Creature, being made of nothing, hath a Superior which created him and governs him, and is capable of a Precept; and consequently capable of Disobedience as well as Obedience to the Precept, to transgress it as well as obey it. God cannot sin, because he can have no Superior to impose a Precept on him. A Rational Creature, with a liberty of Will and power of Choice, cannot be made by Nature of such a mould and temper, but he must be as well capable of chusing wrong, as of chusing right; and therefore the standing Angels, and glorified Saints, though they are immutable, 'tis not by Nature that they are so, but by Grace, and the good pleasure of God; for though they are in Heaven, they have still in their Nature a remote power of sinning, but it shall never be brought into act, because God will always incline their Wills to love him, and never concur with their Wills to any evil act. Since therefore Mutability is essential to a Creature, as a Creature, this changeableness cannot properly be charged upon God as the *Author* of it; for it was not the term of God's creating act, but did necessarily result from the Nature of the Creature, as unchangeableness doth result from the Essence of God. The brittleness of a Glass is no blame to the Art of him that blew up the Glass into such a fashion; that imperfection of brittleness is not from the Workman, but the Matter: So though changeableness be an Imperfection, yet it is so necessary a one, that no Creature can be naturally without it: Besides, though Angels and Men were mutable by Creation, and capable to exercise their Wills, yet they were not necessitated to evil; and this mutability did not infer a necessity that they should fall; because some Angels, which had the same root of changeableness in their Natures with those that fell, did not fall, which they would have done, if capableness of changing, and necessity of changing were one and the same thing.

2. *Though God made the Creature mutable, yet he made him not evil.* There could be nothing of evil in him that God created after his own Image, and pronounced good, *Gen. 1. 27, 31.* Man had an ability to stand, as well as a capacity to fall: He was created with a principle of acting freely, whereby he was capable of loving God as his chief Good, and moving to him as his last end; there was a beam of Light in man's Understanding to know the Rule he was to conform to, a harmony between his Reason and his Affections, an original Righteousness: So that it seem'd more easie for him to determine his Will to continue in Obedience to the Precept, than to swerve from it; to adhere to God as his chief Good, than to listen to the Charms of *Satan*. God created him with those advantages, that he might with more facility have kept his eyes fixt upon the Divine Beauty, than turn his back upon it; and with greater ease have kept the Precept God gave him than have broken it. The very first thought darted, or impression made by God upon the Angelical or Human Nature, was the knowledge of himself as their Author, and could be no other than such whereby both Angels and Men might be excited to a love of that adorable Being that had framed them so gloriously out of nothing: And if they turned their Wills and Affections to another Object, it was not by the direction of God, but contrary to the impression God had made upon them, or the first thought he flash'd into them: They turned themselves to the admiring their own Excellency, or affecting an advantage distinct from that which they were to look for only from God. *1 Tim. 3. 6.* *Pride* was the cause of the Condemnation of the Devil. Though the Wills of Angels and Men were created mutable, and so were imperfect, yet they were not created evil. Though they might sin, yet they might not sin, and therefore were not evil in their own Nature. What reflection then could this Mutability of their Nature be upon God? So far is it from any, that he is fully cleared, by storing up in the Nature of Man sufficient Provision against his departure from him. God was so far from creating him evil, that he fortified him with a knowledge in his Understanding, and a strength in his Nature to withstand any Invasion. The Knowledge was exercised by *Eve* in the very Moment of the Serpents assaulting her; *Gen. 3. 3.* *Eve said to the Serpent,*  
*God*



*God hath said, ye shall not eat of it:* And had her thoughts been intent upon this *God hath said*, and not diverted to the motions of the sensitive Appetite and Liquefied Palate, it had been sufficient to put by all the Paises the Devil did, or could have made at her. So that you see, though God made the Creature Mutable, yet he made him not evil. This clears the Holiness of God.

3. Therefore it follows, *That though God created man changeable, yet he was not the cause of his change by his fall.* Though Man was created defeſible, yet he was not determin'd by God, influencing his Will by any positive act to that change and apollacy. God placed him in a free poſture, ſet life and happineſs before him on the one hand, miſery and death on the other: As he did not draw him into the Arms of perpetual Bleſſedneſs, ſo he did not drive him into the Gulph of his Miſery\*: He did not incline him to Evil. It was repugnant to the Goodneſs of God to corrupt the Rightcouſneſs of thoſe Faculties he had ſo lately beautified him with. It was not likely he ſhould deſace the beauty of that Work he had compos'd with ſo much Wiſdom and Skill. Would he by any Act of his own make that bad, which but a little before he had acquieſced in as good? Angels and Men were left to their liberty and conduct of their Natural Faculties; and if God inſpir'd them with any Motions, they could not but be Motions to good, and ſuted to that righteous Nature he had endued them with. But it is moſt probable that God did not in a Supernatural way act inwardly upon the Mind of Man, but left him wholly to that Power which he had in Creation furniſht him with. The Scripture trees God fully from any blame in this, and lays it wholly upon *Satan* as the Tempter, and upon Man as the Determiner of his own Will. *Gen. 3.6. Eve took of the Fruit, and did eat; and Adam took from her of the Fruit, and did eat.* And *Solomon, Eccl. 7.29.* diſtinguiſheth God's Work in the Creation of Man *upright*, from Man's Work in ſeeking out thoſe ruining *inventions*. God created Man in a righteous ſtate, and Man caſt himſelf into a ſorlorn ſtate. As he was a Mutable Creature, he was from God; as he was a changed and corrupted Creature, it was from the Devil ſeducing, and his own pliableneſs in admitting. As Silver and Gold and other Metals, were created by God in ſuch a form and figure, yet capable of receiving other forms by the induſtrious Art of Man: When the Image of a Man is put upon a piece of Metal, God is not ſaid to create that Image, though he created the Subſtance with ſuch a Property, that it was capable of receiving it: This Capacity is from the nature of the Metal by God's Creation of it, but the carving the Figure of this or that Man is not the Act of God, but the Act of Man. As *Images in Scripture* are called the Work of mens hands, in regard of the imagery, though the Matter, Wood or Stone, upon which the Image was carv'd, was a Work of God's Creative Power. When an Artificer frames an excellent Inſtrument, and a Muſician exactly tunes it, and it comes out of their hands without a blemiſh, but capable to be untun'd by ſome rude hand, or receive a crack by a ſuddain fall, if it meet with a Diſaſter; is either the Workman or Muſician to be blam'd? The ruin of a Houſe, cauſed by the waſtfulneſs or careleſſneſs of the Tenant, is not to be imputed to the Workman that built it ſtrong, and left it in a good Poſture.

2. Proposition, *God's Holineſs is not blemiſht by enjoying Man a Law, which he knew he would not obſerve.*

1. *The Law is not above his ſtrength.* Had the Law been impoſſible to be obſerved, no Crime could have been imputed to the Subject, the fault had layn wholly upon the Governour; the Non-obſervance of it had been from a want of ſtrength, and not from a want of will. Had God commanded *Adam* to fly up to the Sun, when he had not given him Wings, *Adam* might have a will to obey it, but his Power would be too ſhort to perform it. But the Law ſet him for a Rule, had nothing of impoſſibility in it; it was eaſy to be obſerved; the Command was rather below, than above his ſtrength; and the ſanction of it was more apt to reſtrain and fear him from the breach of it, than encourage any daring Attempts againſt it: He had as much power, or rather more, to conform to it, than to warp from it; and greater arguments and intereſt to be obſervant of it, than to violate it; his All was ſecured by the one, and his Ruin aſcertained by the other.

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\* Joh. 5. 3.

† Rom. 7. 12.

\* The Commands of God are not *grievous*; from the first to the last Command, there is nothing impossible, nothing hard to the original and created Nature of Man, which were all summ'd up in a love to God, which was the pleasure and delight of Man, as well as his Duty, if he had not by inconsiderateness neglected the dictates and resolves of his own Understanding. The Law was suited to the strength of Man, and fitted for the Improvement and Perfection of his Nature: In which respect the *Apostle* calls it *good*, as it refers to Man, as well as *holy*, as it refers to God†. Now since God Created man a Creature capable to be governed by a Law, and as a Rational Creature endued with Understanding and Will, not to be govern'd according to his Nature without a Law; was it congruous to the Wisdom of God to respect only the future state of Man, which from the Depth of his Infinite Knowledge, he did infallibly foresee would be miserable, by the wilful defection of Man from the Rule? Had it been agreeable to the Wisdom of God to respect only this future state, and not the present state of the Creature; and therefore leave him lawless, because he knew he would violate the Law? Should God forbear to act like a wise Governour, because he foresaw that Man would cease to act like an obedient Subject? Shall a righteous Magistrate forbear to make just and good Laws, because he foresees, either from the dispositions of his Subjects, their ill humour, or some Circumstances which will intervene, that Multitudes of them will incline to break those Laws, and fall under the Penalty of them? No blame can be upon that Magistrate who minds the Rule of Righteousness, and the necessary Duty of his Government, since he is not the Cause of those turbulent Affections in Men, which he wisely foresees will rise up against his just Edicts.

2. *Though the Law now be above the strength of man, yet is not the holiness of God blemish'd by keeping it up.* 'Tis true, God hath been graciously pleased to mitigate the severity and rigour of the Law by the entrance of the Gospel; yet where men refuse the terms of the Gospel, they continue themselves under the Condemnation of the Law, and are justly guilty of the breach of it, though they have no strength to observe it. The Law, as I said before, was not above mans strength, when he was possessed of Original Righteousness, though it be above mans strength, since he was stript of Original Righteousness. The Command was dated before man had contracted his Impotency, when he had a power to keep it as well as to break it. Had it been enjoyned to man only after the fall, and not before, he might have had a better pretence to excuse himself, because of the impossibility of it; yet he would not have had sufficient excuse, since the impossibility did not result from the Nature of the Law, but from the corrupted Nature of the Creature. It was *weak through the Flesh*, Rom. 8. 3. but it was promulg'd when man had a strength proportion'd to the Commands of it. And now since man hath unhappily made himself incapable of obeying it, must God's Holiness in his Law be blemish'd for enjoyning it? Must he abrogate those Commands, and prohibit what before he enjoyned, for the satisfaction of the corrupted Creature? would not this be his *ceasing to be holy*, that his Creature might be unblameably unrighteous? Must God strip himself of his Holiness, because man will not discharge his Iniquity? He cannot be the cause of sin, by keeping up the Law, who would be the cause of all the unrighteousness of men, by removing the Authority of it. Some things in the Law that are intrinsically good in their own Nature are indispensable, and it is repugnant to the Nature of God not to Command them. If he were not the Guardian of his indispensable Law, he would be the Cause and Countenancer of the Creatures Iniquity. So little reason have men to charge God with being the Cause of their sin, by not repealing his Law to gratifie their Impotence, that he would be unholy if he did. God must not lose his Purity, because man hath lost his, and cast away the Right of his Sovereignty, because man hath cast away his Power of Obedience.

3. *God's foreknowledge that his Law would not be observed, lays no blame upon him.* Though the foreknowledge of God be infallible, yet it doth not necessitate the Creature in acting. It was certain from Eternity, that *Adam* would fall, that men would do such and such Actions, that *Judas* would betray our Saviour; God foreknew all those things from Eternity; but it is as certain that this fore-



foreknowledge did not necessitate the will of *Adam*, or any other Branch of his Posterity, in the doing those Actions that were so foreseen by God; they voluntarily run into such Courses, not by any impulsion. God's Knowledge was not suspended between certainty and uncertainty: He certainly foreknew that his Law would be broken by *Adam*; he foreknew it in his own Decree of not hindering him, by giving *Adam* the efficacious Grace which would infallibly have prevented it; yet *Adam* did freely break this Law, and never imagin'd that the foreknowledge of God did necessitate him to it: He could find no cause of his own sin, but the liberty of his own will: He charges the occasion of his sin upon the *woman*, and consequently upon God in giving the woman to him\*. He could not be so ignorant of the Nature of God, as to imagine him without a foresight of future things, since his knowledge of what was to be known of God by Creation, was greater than any mans since, in all probability. But however, if he were not acquainted with the Notion of God's foreknowledge, he could not be ignorant of his own act; there could not have been any necessity upon him, any kind of constraint of him in his action that could have been unknown to him; and he would not have omitted a Plea of so strong a nature, when he was upon his Trial for Life or Death; especially when he urgeth so weak an Argument to impute his Crime to God, as the gift of the Woman; as if that which was design'd him for a help, were intended for his ruine. If God's prescience takes away the liberty of the Creature, there is no such thing as a free action in the World, (for there is nothing done but is foreknown by God, else we render God of a limited understanding,) nor ever was, no not by God himself *ad extra*: For whatsoever he hath done in Creation, whatsoever he hath done since the Creation, was foreknown by him; he resolved to do it, and therefore foreknew that he would do it: Did God do it therefore necessarily, as necessity is oppos'd to liberty? As he freely decrees what he will do, so he effects what he freely decreed. Foreknowledge is so far from intrenching upon the liberty of the will, that predetermination, which in the notion of it speaks something more, doth not dissolve it: God did not only foreknow, but *determine* the suffering of Christ †. It was *necessary* therefore that Christ should suffer, that God might not be mistaken in his foreknowledge, or come short of his determinate decree: But did this take away the liberty of Christ in suffering? *Eph. 5. 2. Who offered himself up to God*; that is, by a voluntary act, as well as design'd to do it by a determinate Counsel. It did infallibly secure the event, but did not annihilate the liberty of the Action, either in Christ's willingness to suffer, or the Crime of the *Jews* that made him suffer. God's prescience is God's provision of things arising from their proper Causes: As a Gardiner foresees in his Plants the Leaves and the Flowers that will arise from them in the Spring, because he knows the strength and nature of their several Roots which lye under ground, but his foresight of these things is not the cause of the rise and appearance of those Flowers. If any of us see a Ship moving towards such a Rock or Quick-sand, and know it to be govern'd by a negligent Pilot, we shall certainly foresee that the Ship will be torn in pieces by the Rock, or swallowed up by the Sands; but is this foresight of ours from the Causes, any cause of the effect, or can we from hence be said to be the Authours of the miscarriage of the Ship, and the loss of the Passengers and Goods? The fall of *Adam* was foreseen by God to come to pass by the consent of his Freewill in the choice of the proposed Temptation: God foreknew *Adam* would sin, and if *Adam* would not have sinned, God would have foreknown that he would not sin. *Adam* might easily have detected the Serpents fraud, and made a better Election; God foresaw that he would not do it; God's foreknowledge did not make *Adam* guilty or innocent; whether God had foreknown it or no, he was guilty by a free choice, and a willing neglect of his own Duty. *Adam* knew that God foreknew that he might eat of the Fruit, and fall and dye, because God had forbidden him; the foreknowledge that he would do it, was no more a cause of his Action, than the foreknowledge that he might do it. *Judas* certainly knew that his Master foreknew that he should betray him, for Christ had acquainted him with it, *John 13. 21, 26.* yet he never charg'd this foreknowledge of Christ with any guilt of his Treachery.

\* Gen. 3. 12

† Acts 4. 27.  
-3.



3. The third Proposition. *The Holiness of God is not blemish'd by decreeing the eternal Rejection of some men.* Reprobation in its first Notion is an act of preterition, or passing by. A man is not made wicked by the act of God; but it supposeth him wicked; and so 'tis nothing else but God's leaving a man in that guilt and filth wherein he beholds him. In its second Notion 'tis an Ordination, not to a Crime, but to a Punishment; *Jude 4. An ordaining to Condemnation.* And though it be an eternal act of God, yet in order of Nature it follows upon the foresight of the Transgression of Man, and supposeth the Crime. God considers *Adam's* Revolt, and views the whole Mass of his corrupted Posterity, and chuses some to reduce to himself by his Grace, and leaves others to lye sinking in their Ruins. Since all Mankind fell by the fall of *Adam*, and have Corruption conveyed to them successively by that Root whereof they are Branches: All men might justly be left wallowing in that miserable Condition to which they were reduced by the Apostacy of their Common Head; and God might have pass'd by the whole Race of Man, as well as he did the fallen Angels without any hope of Redemption. He was no more bound to restore Man, than to restore Devils, nor bound to repair the Nature of any one Son of *Adam*; and had he dealt with Men as he dealt with the Devils, they had had all or them as little just ground to complain of God; for all Men deserved to be left to themselves, for *all were concluded under sin*: But God calls out some to make Monuments of his Grace, which is an act of the Sovereign Mercy of that Dominion where-  
by *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, Rom. 9. 18.* Others he passes by, and leaves them remaining in that Corruption of Nature wherein they were born. If men have a power to dispose of their own Goods, without any unrighteousness, why should not God dispose of his own Grace, and bestow it upon whom he pleases, since it is a Debt to none, but a free gift to any that enjoy it? \* God is not the cause of sin in this, because his operation about this is negative; 'tis not an action, but a denial of action, and therefore cannot be the cause of the evil actions of men. God acts nothing, but withholds his Power; he doth not enlighten their minds, nor encline their wills so powerfully, as to expel their darkness, and root out those evil Habits which possess them by Nature. God could, if he would, savingly enlighten the minds of all men in the World, and quicken their hearts with a new Life by an invincible Grace; but in not doing it, there is no positive act of God, but a cessation of Action: We may with as much reason say, that God is the Cause of all the sinful Actions that are committed by the Corporation of Devils, since their first Rebellion, because he leaves them to themselves, and bestows not a new Grace upon them: As say God is the Cause of the sins of those that he overlooks and leaves in that state of Guilt wherein he found them. God did not pass by any without the consideration of sin; so that this act of God is not repugnant to his Holiness, but conformable to his Justice.

\* Amyral. de-  
fence de Calv. p.  
145.

4. Proposition. *The Holiness of God is not blemish'd by his secret will to suffer sin to enter into the World.* God never willed sin by his preceptive Will. It was never founded upon, or produced by any word of his, as the Creation was. He never said, Let there be sin under the Heaven, as he said, *Let there be Water under the Heaven.* Nor doth he will it by infusing any Habit of it, or stirring up Inclinations to it; no, *God tempts no man, James 1. 13.* Nor doth he will it by his approving Will; 'tis detestable to him, nor ever can be otherwise: He cannot approve it either before Commission or after.

1. *The Will of God is in some sort concurrent with sin.* He doth not properly will it, but he wills not to hinder it, to which by his Omnipotence he could put a bar. If he did positively will it, it might be wrought by himself, and so could not be evil. If he did in no sort will it, it would not be committed by his Creature: Sin entred into the World, either God willing the permission of it, or not willing the permission of it. The latter cannot be said;  
for



for then the Creature is more powerful than God, and can do that which God will not permit. God can, if he be pleased, banish all sin in a moment out of the World: He could have prevented the Revolt of Angels, and the Fall of Man; they did not sin whether he would or no: He might by his Grace have kept in the first Moment, and made a special impression upon them of the Happiness they already possessed, and the Misery they would incur by any wicked attempt. He could as well have prevented the sin of the fallen Angels, and confirmed them in Grace, as of those that continued in their happy state: He might have appeared to man, informed him of the Issue of his Design, and made secret impressions upon his heart, since he was acquainted with every avenue to his Will. God could have kept all sin out of the world, as well as all Creatures from breathing in it; he was as well able to bar sin for ever out of the World, as to let Creatures lye in the Womb of nothing, wherein they were first wrapped. To say God doth will sin as he doth other things, is to deny his Holiness; to say it entred without any thing of his Will, is to deny his Omnipotence. If he did necessitate *Adam* to fall, what shall we think of his Purity? If *Adam* did fall without any concern of God's Will in it, what shall we say of his Sovereignty? The one taints his Holiness, and the other clips his Power. If it came without any thing of his Will in it, and he did not foresee it, where is his Omniscience? If it entred whether he would or no, where is his Omnipotence. *Rom. 9. 19. Who hath resisted his Will?* There cannot be a lustful Act in *Abimelech*, if God will withhold his Power; *Gen. 20. 6. I withheld thee*: Nor a cursing word in *Balaam's* Mouth, unless God give power to speak it; *Numb. 22. 38. Have I now any power at all to say any thing? The Word that God puts in my mouth, that shall I speak.* As no Action could be sinful, if God had not forbidden it; so no sin could be committed, if God did not will to give way to it.

2. *God doth not will sin directly, and by an efficacious Will.* He doth not directly will it, because he hath prohibited it by his Law, which is a discovery of his Will: So that if he should directly will sin, and directly prohibite it, he would will good and evil in the same manner, and there would be Contradictions in God's Will: To will sin absolutely, is to work it. *Psal. 115. 3. God hath done whatsoever he pleased.* God cannot absolutely will it, because he cannot work it. \* God wills good by a positive decree, because he hath decreed to effect it. He wills evil by a privative decree, because he hath decreed not to give that Grace which would certainly prevent it. † God doth not will sin simply, for that were to approve it, but he wills it, in order to that Good his Wisdom will bring forth from it. He wills not sin for it self, but for the event. To will sin as sin, or as purely evil, is not in the capacity of a Creature, neither of Man nor Devil. The Will of a Rational Creature cannot will any thing but under the appearance of good, of some good in the sin it self, or some good in the issue of it. Much more is this far from God, || who being infinitely good, cannot will evil as evil; and being infinitely knowing, cannot will that for good which is evil. Infinite Wisdom can be under no Errour or Mistake: To will sin as sin, would be an unanswerable blemish on God; but to will to suffer it in order to good, is the glory of his Wisdom: It could never have peep'd up its head, unless there had been some decree of God concerning it. And there had been no decree of God concerning it, had he not intended to bring good and glory out of it. If God did directly will the discovery of his Grace and Mercy to the World, he did in some sort will sin, as that without which there could not have been any appearance of Mercy in the World: For an Innocent Creature is not the Object of Mercy, but a Miserable Creature; and no Rational Creature but must be sinful before it be miserable.

3. *God wills the permission of sin.* He doth not positively will sin, but he positively wills to permit it. And though he doth not approve of sin, yet he approves of that act of his Will, whereby he permits it. For since that

\* Rispolis.

† Bradward.  
*lib. 1 cap. 34.*  
God wills it secundum quid.‡ Aquin. cent.  
*Gen. 1. 1. 25.*



sin could not enter into the World without some concern of God's Will about it, that act of his Will that gave way to it, could not be displeasing to him: God could never be displeased with his own Act: *He is not a man that he should repent*, 1 Sam. 15. 29. What God cannot repent of, he cannot but approve of: 'Tis contrary to the blessedness of God to disapprove of, and be displeased with any act of his own Will. If he hated any act of his own Will, he would hate himself, he would be under a torture: Every one that hates his own acts, is under some disturbance and torment for them. That which is permitted by him, is in it self, and in regard of the evil of it, hateful to him: But as the prospect of that good which he aims at in the permission of it is pleasing to him; so that act of his Will whereby he permits it, is ushered in by an approving act of his Understanding. Either God approved of the permission, or not; if he did not approve his own act of permission, he could not have decreed an act of permission. 'Tis unconceivable that God should decree such an act which he detested, and positively will that which he hated. Though God hated sin, as being against his Holiness, yet he did not hate the permission of sin, as being subservient by the Immenity of his Wisdom to his own Glory. He could never be displeased with that which was the result of his Eternal Counsel, as this decree of permitting sin was, as well as any other decree resolved upon in his own Breast. For as God acts nothing in Time, but what he decreed from Eternity, so he permits nothing in time but what he decreed from Eternity to permit. To speak properly therefore, God doth not will sin, but he wills the permission of it, and this Will to permit is Active and positive in God.

4. *This act of permission is not a meer and naked permission, but such an one as is attended with a certainty of the event.* The decrees of God to make use of the sin of Man for the glory of his Grace in the Mission and Passion of his Son, hung upon this entrance of sin. Would it consist with the Wisdom of God to decree such great and stupendous things, the event whereof should depend upon an uncertain Foundation which he might be mistaken in? God would have sate in Council from Eternity to no purpose, if he had only permitted those things to be done, without any knowledge of the event of this permission: God would not have made such provision for Redemption to no purpose, or an uncertain purpose, which would have been, if Man had not fallen; or if it had been an uncertainty with God whether he would fall or no. Though the Will of God about sin was permissive, yet the Will of God about that Glory he would promote by the defect of the Creature, was positive; and therefore he would not suffer so many positive acts of his Will to hang upon an uncertain Event; and therefore he did wisely and righteously order all things to the accomplishment of his great and gracious Purposes.

5. *This act of permission doth not taint the holiness of God.* That there is such an act as permission, is clear in Scripture; Acts 14. 16. *Who in times past suffered all Nations to walk in their own ways.* But that it doth not blemish the Holiness of God will appear,

1. *From the nature of this permission.*

1. *'Tis not a Moral permission, a giving liberty of toleration by any Law to commit sin with impunity;* when what one Law did forbid, another Law doth leave indifferent to be done or not, as a Man sees good in himself. As when there is a Law made among Men, That no man shall go out of such a City or Country without license; To go out without license is a Crime by the Law; but when that Law is repealed by another, that gives liberty for men to go and come at their pleasure: It doth not make their going or coming necessary, but leaves those which were before bound, to do as they see good in themselves. Such a permission makes a Fact lawful, though not necessary: a man is not oblig'd to do it, but he is left to his own discretion to do as he pleases, without being chargeable with a Crime for doing it. Such a permission there was granted by God to Adam of eating of the fruits of the Garden, to choose any of them



for Food, except the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. It was a Precept to him, not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; but the other was a Permission, whereby it was lawful for him to feed upon any other that was most agreeable to his Appetite: But there is not such a Permission in the case of Sin; this had been an Indulgence of it, which had freed Man from any Crime, and consequently from Punishment; because by such a Permission by Law, he would have had Authority to Sin, if he pleased. God did not remove the Law, which he had before placed as a Bar against Evil, nor ceased that Moral Impediment of his Threatning: Such a Permission as this, to make Sin Lawful or Indifferent, had been a blot upon Gods Holiness.

2. But *this Permission of God in the case of Sin, is no more than the not hindering a sinful Action, which he could have prevented.* 'Tis not so much an Action of God, as a suspension of his Influence, which might have hindered an Evil Act, and a forbearing to restrain the Faculties of Man from Sin; 'tis properly the not exerting that Efficacy, which might change the Counsels that are taken, and prevent the Action intended. As when one Man sees another ready to fall, and can preserve him from falling by reaching out his hand; he permits him to fall, that is, he hinders him not from falling. So God describes his Act about *Abimelech*, Gen. 20. 6. *I withheld thee from sinning against me, therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.* If *Abimelech* had sinned, he had sinned by Gods permission; that is, by Gods not hindering, or not restraining him by making any Impressions upon him. So that Permission is only a withholding that Help and Grace, which (if bestowed) would have been an effectual Remedy to prevent a Crime: And it is rather a Suspension or Cessation, than properly a Permission; and Sin may be said to be committed not without Gods permission, rather than by his Permission.

Thus in the Fall of Man, God did not hold the Reins strict upon *Satan* to restrain him from laying the Bait, nor restrain *Adam* from swallowing the Bait: He kept to himself that Efficacious Grace, which he might have darted out upon Man to prevent his Fall. God left *Satan* to his Malice of Tempting, and *Adam* to his liberty of Resisting, and his own strength, to use that sufficient Grace he had furnish'd him with, whereby he might have resisted and overcome the Temptation. As he did not drive Man to it, so he did not secretly restrain him from it. So in the Jews Crucifying our Saviour; God did not imprint upon their Minds by his Spirit, a consideration of the greatness of the Crime, and the horror of his Justice due to it: And being without those Impediments, they run furiously of their own accord to the Commission of that Evil. As when a Man lets a Wolf or Dog out upon his Prey, he takes off the Chain which held them, and they presently act according to their Natures†. In the Fall of Angels and Men, Gods Act was a leaving them to their own strength: In Sins after the Fall, 'tis Gods giving them up to their own Corruption. The first is a pure suspension of Grace; the other hath the nature of a Punishment, Psal. 81. 12. *So I gave them up to their own hearts lusts.* The first Object of this Permissive Will of God was, to leave Angels and Men to their own liberty, and the use of their Free-will, which was Natural to them||, not adding that Supernatural Grace, which was necessary, not that they should not at all sin, but that they should infallibly not sin: They had a strength sufficient to avoid Sin, but not sufficient infallibly to avoid Sin; a Grace sufficient to preserve them, but not sufficient to confirm them.

† Lawton, p. 23. 64.

| Suarez, de Legib. p. 414.

3. Now *this Permission is not the cause of Sin, nor doth blemish the Holiness of God.* It doth not intrench upon the Freedom of Men, but supposeth it, establisheth it, and leaves Man to it. God acted nothing, but only ceased to Act; and therefore could not be the Efficient cause of Mans Sin. As God is not the Author of good, but by willing and effecting it; so he is not the Author of Evil but by willing and effecting it: But he doth not positively will Evil, nor effect it by any Efficacy of his own. Permission is no Action, nor the cause of that Action which is permitted; but the will of that Person who is permitted to do such an Action, is the cause. God can no more be said to be the cause of Sin, by suffering a Creature to act as it will; than he can be said to be the cause of the not Being of any Crea-

\* Suarez, de Legib. p. 43.



Creature, by denying it Being, and letting it remain Nothing: 'Tis not from God that it is Nothing, 'tis Nothing in it self. Though God be said to be the Cause of Creation, yet he is never by any said to be the Cause of that Nothing which was before Creation. This Permission of God is not the Cause of Sin, but the cause of not hindering Sin. Man and Angels had a Physical Power of sinning from God, as they were created with Free-will, and supported in their Natural strength; but the Moral power to sin was not from God: He counsell'd them not to it, laid no obligation upon them to use their Natural power for such an end. He only left them to their freedom, and not hinder'd them in their acting what he was resolved to permit.

2. The *Holiness* of God is not tainted by this, *because he was under no obligation to hinder their Commission of sin.* Ceasing to act, whereby to prevent a Crime or mischief, brings not a Person permitting it, under guilt, unless where he is under an obligation to prevent it: But God in regard of his Absolute Dominion cannot be charged with any such Obligation. One Man that doth not hinder the Murder of another, when it is in his power, is guilty of the Murder in part; but it is to be considered, that he is under a Tye by Nature, as being of the same kind, and being the others Brother by a communion of Blood; also under an obligation of the Law of Charity, enacted by the Common Sovereign of the World: But what tye was there upon God? since the Infinite Transcendency of his Nature, and his Sovereign Dominion frees him from any such obligation; *Job 9. 12. If he takes away, who shall say, What dost thou?* God might have prevented the Fall of Men and Angels, he might have confirm'd them all in a state of perpetual Innocency; but where is the Obligation? He had made the Creature a Debtor to himself, but he ow'd nothing to the Creature. Before God can be charged with any guilt in this case, it must be proved, not only that he could, but that he was bound to hinder it. No Person can be justly charged with anothers Fault, meerly for not preventing it, unless he be bound to prevent it; else not only the First sin of Angels and Man would be imputed to God, as the Author, but all the sins of Men. He could not be obliged by any Law, because he had no Superiour to impose any Law upon him; and it will be hard to prove, that he was obliged from his own Nature to prevent the entrance of Sin, which he would use as an occasion to declare his own *Holiness* so transcendent a Perfection of his Nature, more than ever it could have been manifested by a total exclusion of it, *viz.* in the Death of Christ. He is no more bound in his own Nature, to preserve by Supernatural Grace his Creature from Falling, after he had framed him with a sufficient strength to stand; than he was obliged in his own Nature to bring his Creature into Being, when it was Nothing. He is not bound to create a Rational Creature, much less bound to create him with Supernatural gifts; though since God would make a Rational Creature, he could not but make him with a Natural Uprightness and rectitude.

God did as much for Angels and Men, as became a Wise Governour: He had publish'd his Law, back'd it with severe Penalties, and the Creature wanted not a Natural strength to observe and obey it. Had not Man a power to obey all the Precepts of the Law, as well as one? How was God bound to give him more Grace, since what he had already was enough to shield him, and keep up his Resistance against all the Power of Hell? It had been enough to have pointed his Will against the Temptation, and he had kept off the force of it. Was there any Promise past to *Adam* of any further Grace, which he could plead as a tye upon God? No such voluntary Limit upon Gods Supream Dominion appears upon Record. Was any thing due to Man, which he had not? Any thing promis'd him, which was not perform'd? What Action of Debt then can the Creature bring against God? Indeed, when Man began to neglect the light of his own Reason, and became Inconsiderate of the Precept, God might have enlightned his Understanding by a special flash, a Supernatural beam, and imprinted upon him a particular consideration of the Necessity of his Obedience, the Misery he was approaching to by his Sin, the folly of any such Apprehension of an equality in Knowledge; he might have convinc'd him of the falsity of the *Serpents* Arguments, and uncas'd to him the Venom that lay under those Baits. But how doth it appear



appear that God was bound to those Additional Acts, when he had already lighted up in him a *Spirit, which was the Candle of the Lord*, Prov. 20. 27. whereby he was able to discern all, if he had attended to it. It was enough that God did not necessitate Man to sin, did not counsel him to it; that he had given him sufficient warning in the Threatning, and sufficient strength in his Faculties, to fortifie him against Temptation. He gave him what was due to him as a Creature of his own framing; he withdrew no help from him, that was due to him as a Creature, and what was not due he was not bound to impart. Man did not beg Preserving Grace of God, and God was not bound to offer it, when he was not Petition'd for it especially: Yet if he had begg'd it, God having before furnish'd him sufficiently, might by the right of his Sovereign Dominion have denied it without any Impeachment of his *Holiness* and *Righteousness*. Though he would not in such a case have dealt so bountifully with his Creature, as he might have done; yet he could not have been impleaded, as dealing Unrighteously with his Creature. The single word that God had already utter'd, when he gave him his Precept, was enough to oppose against all the *Devils* Wiles, which tended to invalidate that Word: The Understanding of Man could not imagine, that the Word of God was vainly spoken; and the very suggestion of the *Devil*, as if the Creator should envy his Creature, would have appear'd ridiculous, if he had attended to the Voice of his own Reason. God had done enough for him, and was obliged to do no more, and dealt not Unrighteously in leaving him to act according to the Principles of his Nature.

To Conclude, If Gods Permission of Sin were enough to charge it upon God, or if God had been obliged to give *Adam* Supernatural Grace: *Adam*, that had so capacious a Brain, could not be without that Plea in his Mouth, *Lord, thou mightest have prevented it; the commission of it by me could not have been without thy permission of it: Or, Thou hast been wanting to me, as the Author of my Nature.* No such Plea is brought by *Adam* into the Court, when God Tried and Cast him: No such Pleas can have any strength in them. *Adam* had reason enough to know, that there was sufficient Reason to over-rule such a Plea.

Since the Permission of Sin casts no Durt upon the *Holiness* of God, as I think hath been cleared, we may under this Head consider Two things more.

I. That Gods Permission of Sin, is not so much as his Restraint or Limitation of it. Since the entrance of the *First sin* into the World by *Adam*, God is more a hinderer than a permitter of it. If he hath permitted that which he could have prevented, he prevents a world more, that he might, if he pleased, permit: The Hedges about Sin are larger than the Outlets; they are but a few Streams that glide about the World, in comparison of that mighty Torrent he dams up both in Men and Devils. He that understands, what a Lake of *Sodom* is in every Mans Nature, since the universal Infection of Humane Nature, as the *Apostle* describes it Rom. 3. 9, 10, &c. must acknowledge, That if God should cast the Reins upon the Necks of Sinful men, they would run into Thousands of abominable Crimes, more than they do: The impression of all Natural Laws would be raz'd out, the World would be a publick Stews, and a more bloody Slaughter-house; Humane Society would sink into a *Chaos*; no Star-light of commendable Morality would be seen in it; the World would be no longer an Earth, but an Hell, and have lain deeper in Wickedness than it doth. If God did not limit Sin, as he doth the Sea, and put Bars to the Waves of the Heart, as well as those of the Waters, and say of them, *Hitherto you shall go, and no further*; Man hath such a furious Ocean in him, as would over-flow the Banks; and where it makes a breach in one place, it would in a Thousand, if God should suffer it to act according to its impetuous Current.

As the *Devil* hath Lust enough to destroy all Mankind, if God did not bridle him; deal with every Man, as he did with *Job*, ruine their Comforts, and deform their Bodies with *Scabs*; infect Religion with a Thousand more Errors; sling Disorders into Common-wealths, and make them as a Fiery Furnace, full of nothing but Flame. If He were not Chain'd by that Powerful Arm, that might let him loose



2. Psal. 5. 1.  
as the word  
beareth witness  
to it.

loose to fulfil his Malicious Fury; what Rapines, Murders, Thefts, would be committed, if he did not flint him? *Abimelech* would not only Lust after *Sarah*, but dellow'r her; *Laban* not only pursue *Jacob*, but rille him; *Saul* not only hate *David*, but murder him; *David* not only threaten *Nabal*, but root him up, and his Family, did not God girdle in the *Wrath of Man*\*: A greater remainder of Wrath is pent in, than flames out, which yet swells for an Outlet. God may be concluded more Holy in Preventing Mens sins, than the Author of Sin in Permitting some; since were it not for his Restraints by the pull-back of Conscience, and inlus'd Motions and outward Impediments, the World would swarm more with this Cursed Brood.

Manus bonum  
with Brad-  
ward.

2. *His Permission of Sin is in order to his own Glory, and a greater Good.* 'Tis no reflection upon the Divine Goodness to leave Man to his own Conduct, whereby such a Deformity as *Sin* sets foot in the World; since he makes his Wisdom illustrious in bringing Good out of Evil, and a Good greater than that Evil he suffer'd to spring up†. God did not permit Sin, as Sin, or permit it barely for it self. As Sin is not lovely in its own Nature; so neither is the Permission of Sin intrinsically good or amiable for it self, but for those ends aimed at in the Permission of it. God permitted Sin, but approved not of the Object of that Permission, *Sin*; because, that considered in its own Nature is solely Evil: Nor can we think, that God could approve of the Act of Permission, considered only in it self as an Act; but as it respected that Event which his Wisdom would order by it. We cannot suppose that God should permit Sin, but for some great and glorious End; for it is the manifestation of his own glorious Perfections he intends in all the Acts of his Will. *Prov. 16. 4. The Lord hath made all things for himself; he hath wrought all things; which is not only his act of Creation, but Ordination: [For Himself,] that is, for the discovery of the Excellency of his Nature, and the Communication of himself to his Creature.* Sin indeed in its own Nature hath no tendency to a good End, the Womb of it Teems with nothing but Monsters; 'tis a spurn at Gods Sovereignty, and a slight of his Goodness: It both deforms and torments the Person that acts it; 'tis black and abominable, and hath not a mite of Goodness in the Nature of it. If it ends in any good, 'tis only from that Infinite Transcendency of skill, that can bring Good out of Evil, as well as Light out of Darkness.

1. Gen. 3. 15.  
17.

Therefore God did not permit it as Sin, but as it was an occasion for the manifestation of his own Glory. Though the Goodness of God would have appear'd in the Preservation of the World, as well as it did in the Creation of it; yet his Mercy could not have appear'd without the Entrance of Sin, because the Object of Mercy is a *Miserable Creature*; but Man could not be Miserable as long as he remained Innocent. The Reign of *Sin* opened a door for the Reign and Triumph of *Grace*, *Rom. 5. 21. As sin hath reigned unto death, so might grace reign through righteousness to eternal life:* Without it, the Bowels of Mercy had never founded, and the ravishing Musick of *Divine Grace* could never have been heard by the Creature. Mercy, which renders God so amiable, could never else have beam'd out to the World. Angels and Men upon this occasion beheld the stirrings of *Divine Grace*, and the Tenderness of *Divine Nature*, and the glory of the Divine Persons in their several Functions about the Redemption of Man, which had else been a Spring shut up and a Fountain sealed; the Song of *Glory to God, and Good will to Men* in a way of Redemption had never been Sung by them. It appears in his dealings with *Adam*, that he permitted his Fall, not only to shew his Justice in punishing, but principally his Mercy in rescuing; since he proclaims to him first the Promise of a Redeemer to *bruise the Serpents head*, before he settled the Punishment he should smart under in the World†. And what fairer prospect could the Creature have of the Holiness of God, and his Hatred of Sin, than in the edge of that Sword of *Justice*, which punished it in the Sinner; but glitter'd more in the Punishment of a Surety so near Allied to him. Had not Man been Criminal, he could not have been Punishable, nor any been punishable for him: And the Pulse of *Divine Holiness* could not have beaten so quick, and been so visible, without an exercise of his Vindictive Justice. He left Mans mutable Nature, to fall under *Unrighteousness*, that thereby he might commend the

Right-



*Righteousness* of his own Nature\*. *Adams Sin* in its Nature tended to the ruine\* *Rom. 3.7.* of the World, and God takes an occasion from it for the glory of his Grace in the Redemption of the World: He brings forth thereby a new Scene of Wonders from Heaven, and a surprizing Knowledge on Earth: As the *Sun* breaks out more strongly after a Night of Darkness and Tempest. As God in Creation framed a *Chaos* by his Power, to manifest his Wisdom in bringing Order out of Disorder, Light out of Darkness, Beauty out of Confusion and Deformity; when he was able by a Word to have made all Creatures stand up in their Beauty, without the precedency of a *Chaos*: So God permitted a Moral *Chaos*, to manifest a greater Wisdom in the repairing a broken Image, and restoring a deplorable Creature, and bringing out those Perfections of his Nature, which had else been wrapt up in a perpetual silence in his own bosom†. It was therefore very congruous to the Holiness of God, to permit that which he could make subservient for his own glory, and particularly for the manifestation of this Attribute of Holiness, which seems to be in opposition to such a permission.

† But if the  
Holiness of God  
is the cause  
of the  
destruction, I  
have said  
that in the  
Attribute of  
Wisdom.

5. Proposition: *The Holiness of God is not blemish'd by his concurrence with the Creature in the material part of a sinful Act.* Some to free God from having any hand in Sin, deny his concurrence to the Actions of the Creature; because, if he concurs to a sinful Action, he concurs to the Sin also: Not understanding, how there can be a distinction between the Act, and the Sinfulness or Viciousness of it; and how God can concur to a Natural Action, without being stain'd by that Moral Evil which cleaves to it.

For the understanding of this, observe

1. *There is a concurrence of God to all the acts of the Creature; Acts 17. 28. In him we live, and move, and have our being.* We depend upon God in our Acting, as well as in our Being: There is as much an efficacy of God in our Motion, as in our Production; as none have life without his Power in producing it, so none have any operation without his Providence concurring with it. *In him, or by him*, that is, by his Virtue preserving and governing our Motions, as well as by his Power bringing us into Being. Hence Man is compared to an *Ax*, *Isai. 10. 15.* an Instrument that hath no action, without the cooperation of a Superiour Agent handling it: And the Actions of the Second Causes are ascrib'd to God; the *Grass*, that is the product of the Sun, Rain, and Earth, he is said to make to grow upon the Mountains, *Psal. 147. 8.* and the *Skin and Flesh*, which is by Natural generation, he is said to cloath us with, *Job 10. 5.* in regard of his co-working with Second Causes, according to their Natures. As nothing can exist, so nothing can operate without him; let his Concurrence be removed, and the Being and Action of the Creature cease: Remove the *Sun* from the Horizon, or a *Candle* from a Room, and the Light which flowed from either of them ceaseth. Without Gods preserving and concurring Power, the course of Nature would sink, and the Creation be in vain. || All Created things depend upon God as Agents, as well as Beings, and are subordinate to him in a way of Action, as well as in a way of Existing. If God suspend his Influence from their Action, they would cease to act, (as the *Fire* did from burning the *Three Children*) as well as if God suspend his Influence from their Being, they would cease to be. God supports the Nature whereby Actions are wrought, the Mind where Actions are consulted, and the Will where Actions are determin'd, and the Motive power whereby Actions are produced. The Mind could not contrive, nor the Hand act a Wickedness, if God did not support the Power of the one in designing, and the Strength of the other in executing a wicked Intention. Every faculty in its Being, and every faculty in its Motion, hath a dependance upon the Influence of God. To make the Creature Independent upon God in any thing which speaks Perfection, as Action considered as Action is, is to make the Creature a Sovereign Being. Indeed we cannot imagine the Concurrence of God to the good Actions of Men since the Fall, without granting a Concurrence of God to evil Actions; because there is no Action so purely Good, but hath a mixture of Evil in it, though it takes its denomination of Good from the better part, *Eccles. 7. 20. There is no man that doth good and sins not.*

|| Suarez, Me.  
taph. p. 2. 1.  
p. 552.



2. *Though the Natural virtue of doing a sinful Action be from God, and supported by him, yet this doth not blemish the Holiness of God; while God concurs with them in the Act, he instils no Evil into Men.*

1. *No Act in regard of the substance of it is Evil.* Most of the Actions of our Faculties, as they are Actions, might have been in the state of Innocency. Eating is an act Adam would have used, if he had stood firm, but not Eating to excess. Worship was an act that should have been perform'd to God in Innocence, but not hypocritically. Every Action is good by a physical goodness, as it is an act of the Mind or hand, which have a Natural goodness by Creation; but every Action is not Morally good: The *Physical* goodness of the Action depends on God, the *Moral* Evil on the Creature. \* There is no Action, as a Corporeal action, is prohibited by the Law of God; but as it springs from an Evil disposition, and is tainted by a venomous temper of Mind. There is no action so bad, as attended with such Objects and Circumstances; but if the Objects and Circumstances were changed, might be a brave and commendable Action: So that the *Moral* goodness or badness of an Act is not to be esteemed from the substance of the act, which hath always a *Physical* goodness; but from the Objects, Circumstances, and Constitution of the Mind in the doing of it. Worship is an Act good in it self, but the worship of an Image is bad in regard of the Object. Were that act of Worship directed to God, that is paid to a Statue, and offered up to him with a sincere frame of Mind, it would be Morally good. The Act in regard of its substance is the same in both, and considered as separated from the Object to which the Worship is directed, hath the same real goodness in regard of its substance; but when you consider this action in relation to the different Objects, the one hath a *Moral Goodness* and the other a *Moral Evil*. So in Speaking; *Speaking* being a motion of the Tongue in the forming of words, is an excellency belonging to a Reasonable Creature; an Endowment bestowed, continued, and supported by God. Now if the same Tongue forms words whereby it curseth God this minute, and forms words whereby it blesses and praises God the next minute; the faculty of Speaking is the same, the motion of the Tongue is the same in pronouncing the Name of God either in a way of Cursing or Blessing, *James 3.9, 10.* 'tis the same mouth that *blesseth and curseth*; and the motion of it is *naturally* good in regard of the substance of the Act in both; 'tis the use of an excellent Power God hath given, and which God preserves in the use of it. But the estimation of the *Moral Goodness* or *Evil* is not from the act it self, but from the disposition of the Mind. Once more, Killing as an act is good, nor is it unlawful as an Act: For if so, God would never have commanded his People *Israel* to wage any War, and Justice could not be done upon Malefactors by the Magistrate. A Man were bound to sacrifice his life to the fury of an Invader, rather than secure it by dispatching that of an Enemy. But killing an Innocent, or killing without Authority, or out of revenge, is bad. 'Tis not the Material part of the act, but the Object, Manner, and Circumstance, that makes it good or evil. 'Tis no blemish to Gods *Holiness* to concur to the substance of an Action, without having any hand in the Immorality of it, because whatsoever is real in the substance of the Action might be done without Evil. 'Tis not Evil as it is an act, as it is a motion of the Tongue or Hand, for then every motion of the Tongue or Hand would be Evil.

2. Hence it follows, that *an Act as an Act is one thing, and the Viciousness another.*

† The Action is the efficacy of the Faculty, extending it self to some outward Object; but the Sinfulness of an act consists in a privation of that Comeliness and Righteousness, which ought to be in an Action; in a want of conformity of the act with the Law of God, either written in Nature, or revealed in the Word. Now the Sinfulness of an Action is not the act it self, but is considered in it as it is related to the Law, and is a deviation from it; and so it is something cleaving to the Action, and therefore to be distinguish'd from the act it self, which is the Subject of the Sinfulness. When we say, such an Action is sinful, the Action is the Subject, and the Sinfulness of the Action is that which adheres to it. The Action is not the Sinfulness, nor the Sinfulness the Action; they are distinguish'd as the Member, and a disease in the Member, the Arm and the Palsie in it: The Arm is not the Palsie, nor is the Palsie the Arm; but the Palsie is a Disease that cleaves to the Arm: So Sinfulness is a deformity that cleaves to an Action.

The

\* Amyrald.  
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† Amyrald.  
p. 321, 322.



The Evil of an Action is not the effect of an Action, nor attends it as it is an Action, but as it is an Action so circumstantiated, and conversant about this or that Object; for the same Action done by two several Persons, may be good in one, and bad in the other. As when *two Judges* are in joynt Communion for the Trial of a Malefactor, both upon the appearance of his Guilt condemn him. This Action in both, considered *as an Action*, is good; for it is an adjudging a Man to death, whose Crime deserves such a punishment. But this same Act, which is but one joynt Act of both, may be Morally good in one Judge, and Morally evil in the other: Morally good in him that Condemns him out of an unbiaised consideration of the Demerit of his Fact, Obedience to the Law, and Conscience of the Duty of his place; and Morally evil in the other, who hath no respect to those Considerations, but joyns in the act of Condemnation, principally moved by some private Animosity against the Prisoner, and desire of revenge for some Injury he hath really received, or imagines that he hath received from him. The Act in it self is the same materially in both; but in one it is an Act of Justice, and in the other an Act of Murder, as it respects the Principles and Motives of it in the two Judges; take away the respect of private Revenge, and the Action in the Ill Judge had been as laudable as the Action of the other. The substance of an Act, and the sinfulness of an Act, are separable and distinguishable; and God may concur with the substance of an Act, without concurring with the sinfulness of the Act: As the good Judge, that Condemned the Prisoner out of Conscience, concurred with the evil Judge, who condemned the Prisoner out of private Revenge; not in the Principle and Motive of Condemnation, but in the *Material* part of Condemnation. So God assists in that Action of a Man wherein Sin is placed, but not in that which is the *Formal* reason of Sin, which is a privation of some Perfection the Action ought Morally to have.

3. It will appear further in this, that *hence it follows that the Action, and the viciousness of the Action, may have two distinct Causes.* That may be a cause of the one that is not the cause of the other, and hath no hand in the producing of it. God concurs to the Act of the Mind as it Counsels, and to the external Action upon that Counsel, as he preserves the Faculty, and gives strength to the Mind to consult, and the other parts to execute; yet he is not in the least tainted with the Viciousness of the Action. Though the Action be from God as a concurrent Cause, yet the ill quality of the Action is solely from the Creature with whom God concurs. The *Sun* and the *Earth* concur to the production of all the Plants, that are formed in the womb of the one, and Midwiv'd by the other: The *Sun* distributes Heat, and the *Earth* communicates Sap; 'tis the same Heat dispersed by the one, and the same Juyce bestowed by the other: It hath not a sweet Juyce for one, and a sour Juyce for another. This general Influx of the *Sun* and *Earth* is not the immediate cause that one Plant is poysonous, and another wholsom; but the Sap of the Earth is turned by the Nature and quality of each Plant: If there were not such an Influx of the *Sun* and *Earth*, no Plant could exert that poyson which is in its Nature; but yet the *Sun* and *Earth* are not the cause of that poyson which is in the Nature of the Plant. If God did not concur to the motions of Men, there could be no sinful Action, because there could be no Action at all; yet this Concurrence is not the cause of that Venom that is in the Action, which ariseth from the Corrupt Nature of the Creature, no more than the *Sun* and *Earth* are the cause of the Poyson of the Plant, which is purely the effect of its own Nature upon that general Influx of the *Sun* and *Earth*. The Influence of God pierceth through all Subjects; but the Action of Man done by that Influence is vitiated according to the Nature of its own Corruption. As the Sun equally shines through all the Quarrels in the Window; if the Glasse be bright and clear, there is a pure splendor; if it be Red or Green the splendor is from the Sun, but the discolouring of that Light upon the Wall, is from the quality of the Glasse.† But to be yet plainer; The Soul is the Image of God, and by the Acts of the Soul, we may come to the knowledge of the Acts of God; the Soul gives motion to the Body and every Member of it, and no Member could move without a concurrent virtue of the Soul; if a Member be Paralitick or Gouty, whatsoever motion that Gouty Member hath, is derived to it from the Soul; but the Goutyness of the Member, was not the Act of the Soul,

† Zanch.  
Tom. 2. lib. 5.  
cap. 4. § 4.  
p. 226.



but the fruit of Ill humors in the Body; the lameness of the Member, and the motion of the Member, have two distinct causes, the motion is from one cause, and the Ill motion from another. As the Member could not move irregularly without some Ill humor or cause of that distemper; so it could not move at all without the activity of the Soul: So though God concur to the act of Understanding, Willing, and Execution, why can he not be as free from the Irregularity in all those, as the Soul is free from the Irregularity of the motion of the Body, while it is the cause of the motion it self? There are two Illustrations generally used in this case, that are not unfit; the motion of the *Pen* in writing is from the hand that holds it, but the Blurs by the *Pen* are from some fault in the *Pen* it self: And the Musick of the *Instrument* is from the hand that touches it, but the Jarring from the faultiness of the Strings; both are the causes of the motion of the *Pen* and *Strings*, but not the *blurs* or *jarrings*.

4. *'Tis very congruous to the Wisdom of God, to move his Creatures according to their particular Natures; but this Motion makes him not the cause of Sin.* Had our Innocent Nature continued, God had moved us according to that Innocent Nature; but when the state was changed for a Corrupt one, God must either forbear all concurrence, and so annihilate the World, or move us according to that Nature he finds in us. If he had overthrown the World upon the entrance of Sin, and created another upon the same terms, Sin might have as soon defac'd his *second* Work, as it did the *first*; and then it would follow, that God would have been alway building and demolishing. It was not fit for God to cease from acting as a Wise Governour of his Creature, because Man did cease from his Loyalty as a Subject. Is it not more agreeable to Gods Wisdom as a Governour, to concur with his Creature according to his Nature, than to deny his concurrence upon every Evil determination of the Creature? God concurr'd with *Adams* mutable Nature in his first act of Sin; he concurr'd to the act and left him to his Mutability. If *Adam* had put out his hand to eat of any other unforbidden Fruit, God would have supported his Natural faculty then, and concurr'd with him in his motion.

When *Adam* would put out his hand to take the Forbidden Fruit, God concurr'd to that Natural action; but left him to the choice of the Object, and to the use of his mutable Nature: And when Man became Apostate, God concurs with him according to that condition wherein he found him, and cannot move him otherwise, unless he should alter that Nature Man had contracted. God moving the Creature as he found him, is no cause of the Ill motion of the Creature: As when a Wheel is broken the space of a foot, it cannot but move ill in that part till it be mended. He that moves it, uses the same motion (as it is his Act) which he would have done had the Wheel been sound; the motion is good in the Mover, but bad in the Subject: 'Tis not the fault of him that moves it, but the fault of that Wheel that is moved, whose breaches came by some other cause. A Man doth not use to lay aside his Watch for some Irregularity, as long as it is capable of motion, but winds it up: Why should God cease from concurring with his Creature in its vital Operations and other actions of his Will, because there was a flaw contracted in that Nature, that came right and true out of his hand? And as he that winds up his disordered Watch, is in the same manner the cause of its motion then, as he was when it was regular; yet by that act of his, he is not the cause of the false motion of it, but that is from the deficiency of some part of the Watch it self: So though God concurs to that Action of the Creature, whereby the Wickedness of the Heart is drawn out; yet is not God therefore as Unholy as the Heart.

5. *God hath one End in his Concurrence, and Man another in his Action.* So that there is a Righteous, and often a gracious End in God, when there is a base and unworthy End in Man. God concurs to the substance of the Act; Man produceth the circumstance of the Act, whereby it is Evil. God orders both the Action wherein he concurs, and the Sinfulness over which he presides, as a Governour, to his own Ends. In *Josephs* case, Man was sinful, and God merciful; his Brethren acted Envy, and God design'd Mercy, Gen. 45. 45. They would be rid of him as an Eyesore, and God concurr'd with their Action to make him their Preserver, Gen. 50. 20. *Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good.*

God



God concur'd to *Judas* his action of betraying our *Saviour*; he supported his Nature while he contracted with the Priests, and supported his Members while he was their Guide to apprehend him; God's end was the manifestation of his choicest love to Man, and *Judas* his end was the gratification of his own Covetousness. The *Affyrian* did a Divine Work against *Hierusalem*, but not with a Divine end\*. \*16. 10. 11. He had a mind to enlarge his *Empire*, enrich his Coffers with the Spoil, and gain the Title of a Conqueror; he is desirous to Invade his Neighbours, and God employs him to punish his Rebels; but *he means not so, nor doth his heart think so*: He intended not as God intended. The *Axe* doth not think what the Carpenter intends to do with it. But God used the rapine of an Ambitious Nature as an Instrument of his Justice: As the exposing Malefactors to wild Beasts was an ancient Punishment, whereby the Magistrate intended the execution of Justice, and to that purpose used the natural fierceness of the Beasts to an end different from what those ravaging Creatures aim'd at. God concur'd with *Satan* in spoiling *Job* of his Goods, and scaring his Body; God gave *Satan* license to do it, and *Job* acknowledges Job 1. 12. 21. it to be God's act: But their ends were different; God concurred with *Satan* for the clearing the Integrity of his Servant, when *Satan* aim'd at nothing but the provoking him to Curse his Creator. The *Physician* applies Leeches to suck the superfluous blood, but the Leeches suck to glut themselves, without any regard to the intention of the Physician, and the welfare of the Patient. In the same act where men intend to hurt, God intends to correct; so that his concurrence is in a holy manner, while men commit unrighteous actions. A Judge commands the Executioner to execute the Sentence of Death which he hath justly pronounced against a Malefactor, and admonisheth him to do it out of love to Justice; the Executioner hath the Authority of the Judge for his Commission, and the protection of the Judge for his Security: The Judge stands by to countenance and secure him in the doing of it; but if the Executioner hath not the same intention as the Judge, *viz.* a love to Justice in the performance of his Office, but a private hatred to the Offender; the Judge, though he commanded the fact of the Executioner, yet did not command this Error of his in it; and though he protects him in the Fact, yet he owns not this corrupt disposition in him in the doing of what was enjoyn'd him, as any act of his own.

To Conclude this. Since the Creature cannot act without God, cannot lift up a Hand, or move his Tongue, without God's preserving and upholding the Faculty, and preserving the power of Action, and preserving every Member of the Body in its actual Motion, and in every circumstance of its Motion, we must necessarily suppose God to have such a way of concurrence as doth not intrench upon his Holiness. We must not equal the Creature to God, by denying its dependence on him: Nor must we imagine such a concurrence to the sinfulness of an act, as stains the Divine Purity, which is I think, sufficiently salv'd by distinguishing the matter of the act from the evil adhering to it: For since all evil is founded in some good; the evil is distinguishable from the good, and the deformity of the action from the action it self, which as it is a created act, hath a dependance on the will and influence of God: And as it is a sinful act, is the product of the will of the Creature.

6. Proposition. *The holiness of God is not blemish'd by proposing Objects to a man, which he makes use of to sin.* There is no Object propos'd to man, but is directed by the Providence of God, which influenceth all motions in the World; and there is no Object propos'd to man, but his active Nature may, according to the goodness or badness of his disposition, make a good or an ill use of. That two men, one of a charitable, the other of a hard-hearted disposition, meet with an indigent and necessitous Object, is from the Providence of God; yet this indigent person is relieved by the one, and neglected by the other. There could be no action in the World, but about some Object; there could be no Object offer'd to us but by Divine Providence; the active Nature of man would be in vain, if there were not Objects about which it might be exercis'd. Nothing could present it self to man as an Object, either to excite his Grace, or awaken his Corruption, but by the conduct



conduct of the Governour of the World. That *David* should walk upon the Battlements of his Palace, and *Bathsheba* be in the Bath at the same time, was from the Divine Providence which orders all the affairs of the World\*; and so some understand *Jer. 6. 21. Thus saith the Lord, I will lay stumbling blocks before this People, and the Fathers and Sons together shall fall upon them.* Since they have offered Sacrifices without those due qualifications in their hearts, which were necessary to render them acceptable to me, I will lay in their way such Objects, which their Corruption will use ill to their further sin and ruin; so *Psal. 105. 25. He turned their heart to bite his people;* that is, by the multiplying his People, he gave occasion to the *Egyptians* of hating them, instead of caring for them as they had formerly done.

But God's Holiness is not blemish'd by this; for,

1. *This proposing or presenting of Objects invades not the liberty of any man:* The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil set in the midst of the Garden of *Eden*, had no violent influence on man to force him to eat of it; his liberty to eat of it, or not, was reserved intire to himself; no such Charge can be brought against any Object whatsoever. If a man meet accidentally at a Table with Meat that is grateful to his Palate, but hurtful to the present temper of his Body; doth the presenting this sort of Food to him strip him of his liberty to decline it, as well as to feed of it? Can the Food have any internal influence upon his will, and lay the freedom of it asleep whether he will or no? Is there any Charm in that, more than in other sorts of Diet? No; but it is the habit of love which he hath to that particular Dish, the curiosity of his Fancy, and the strength of his own Appetite, whereby he is brought into a kind of slavery to that particular Meat, and not any thing in the food itself. When the word is proposed to two persons, 'tis embrac'd by the one, rejected by the other; is it from the word itself, which is the Object that these two persons perform different acts? The Object is the same to both, but the manner of acting about the Object is not the same: Is there any invasion of their liberty by it? Is the one forced by the word to receive it, and the other forced by the word to reject it? Two such contrary effects cannot proceed from one and the same Cause: Outward things have only an *objective* influence, not an inward: † If the meer proposal of things did suspend or strike down the liberty of Man, no Angels in Heaven, no Man upon Earth, no not our Saviour himself, could do any thing freely, but by force: Objects that are ill used are of God's Creation, and though they have allurements in them, yet they have no compulsive power over the will. The Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was pleasing to the sight; it had a quality to allure, there had not else needed a Prohibition to bar the eating of it; but it could not have so much power to allure as the Divine threatening to deter.

2. *The Objects are good in themselves, but the ill use of them is from mans corruption.* *Bathsheba* was by God's Providence presented to *David's* sight, but it was *David's* disposition moved him to so evil an act: What if God knew that he would use that Object ill? yet he knew he had given him a power to refrain from any ill use of it: The Objects are innocent, but our Corruption poisons them. The same Object hath been used by one to holy purposes and holy improvements, that hath been used by another to sinful ends; when a charitable Object is presented to a good man and a cruel man, one relieves him, the other reviles him: The Object was rather an occasion to draw out the Charity of one, as well as the other; but the refusing to reach out a helping hand, was not from the person in Calamity, but the disposition of the Refuser to whom he was presented: 'Tis not from the nature of the Object that men do good or evil, but from the disposition of the person; what is good in it self, is made bad by our Corruption. As the same Meat which nourishes and strengthens a sound Constitution, cherisheth the Disease of another that eats at the same Table, not from any unwholsom quality in the Food, but the vitious quality of the humours lodging in the Stomach, which turn the Diet into fuel for themselves, which in its own nature was apt to engender a wholsom juyce. Some are perfected by the same things whereby others are ruin'd. Riches are used by some, not only for their own, but the advantage of others in the World; by others

† Amyral. de  
libero arbit.  
p. 224.



thers only for themselves, and scarcely so much as their necessities require. Is this the fault of the wealth, or the dispositions of the Persons, who are covetous instead of being Generous? 'Tis a Calumny therefore upon God to charge him with the sin of man upon this account: The rain that drops from the Clouds upon the Plants, is sweet in it self, but when it moistens the root of any venomous Plant, 'tis turn'd into the juyce of the Plant, and becomes venomous with it. The Miracles that our Saviour wrought, were applauded by some, and envied by the *Pharisees*; the sin arose not from the nature of the Miracles, but the Malice of their spirits: The Miracles were fitter in their own nature to have induced them to an adoration of our Saviour, than to excite so vile a Passion against one that had so many marks from Heaven to dignifie him, and proclaim him worthy of their respect. The Person of Christ was an Object proposed to the *Jews*; some worship him, others condemn and crucifie him, and according to their several Vices and bale ends they use this object. *Judas* to content his Covetousness, the *Pharisees* to glut their Revenge, *Pilate* for his Ambition, to preserve himself in his Government, and avoid the Articles the People might charge him with of Countenancing an Enemy to *Cæsar*. \* God at that time put into their minds a rational and true Proposition which they apply to ill purposes. *Caiphas* said, that it was expedient for one man to dye for the people, which he spake not of himself, *Joh. 11. 50, 51*. God put it into his mind, but he might have applied it better than he did, and considered, though the Maxim was commendable, whether it might justly be applied to Christ, or whether there was such a necessity that he must dye, or the Nation be destroy'd by the *Romans*: The Maxim was sound and holy, decreed by God; but what an ill use did the High Priest make of it to put Christ to death as a seditious Person, to save the Nation from the *Roman* Fury?

\* Amyrald.  
Joh. 11. 50, 51.

3. Since the natural Corruption of men will use such Objects ill, may not God without tainting himself, present such Objects to them in subserviency to his gracious Decrees? Whatsoever God should present to men in that state, they would make an ill use of; hath not God then the Sovereign Prerogative to present what he pleases, and suppress others? To offer that to them which may serve his holy purpose, and hide other things from them which are not so conducing to his gracious ends, which would be as much the occasions of exciting their sin, as the others which he doth bring forth to their view? The *Jews*, at the time of Christ, were of a turbulent and seditious humour, they expected a *Messiah*, a Temporal King, and would readily have embraced any occasion to have been up in arms to have delivered themselves from the *Roman* yoke; to this purpose the People attempted once to make him King: And probably the expectation they had that he had such a Design to Head them, might be one reason of their *Hosannas*, because without some such conceit it was not probable they should so soon change their note, and vote him to the Cross in so short a time, after they had applauded him as if he had been upon a Throne; but their being defeated of strong Expectations, usually ended in a more ardent Fury. This turbulent and seditious humour God directs in another Chancel, suppresseth all Occurrences that might excite them to a Rebellion against the *Romans*, which if he had given way to, the crucifying Christ, which was God's design to bring about at that time, had not probably been effected, and the Salvation of Mankind been hindred or stood at a stay for a time. God therefore orders such Objects and Occasions, that might direct this seditious Humour to another Chancel, which would else have run out in other Actions, which had not been conducing to the great Design he had then in the World. Is it not the right of God, and without any blemish to his Holiness, to use those Corruptions which he finds sown in the Nature of his Creature by the hand of *Satan*, and to propose such Objects as may excite the exercise of them for his own service? Sure God hath as much right to serve himself of the Creature of his own framing, and what Natures soever they are possessed with, and to present Objects to that purpose, as a Falconer hath to offer this or that Bird to his Hawk to exercise his courage, and excite his ravenousness, without being termed the Author of that ravenousness in the Creature. God planted not those Corruptions in the *Jews*, but finds them in those Persons over whom he hath an absolute



\* *Thm 1. 9. 11*  
*spoken of before,*  
*but it is neces-*  
*sary now.*

absolute Sovereignty in the right of a Creator, and that of a Judge for their sins: And by the right of that Sovereignty may offer such Objects and Occasions, which, though innocent in themselves, he knows they will make use of to ill purposes, but which by the same decree that he resolves to present such Occasions to them, he also resolves to make use of them for his own glory. \* 'Tis not conceivable by us what way that Death of Christ, which was necessary for the Satisfaction of Divine Justice, could be brought about without ordering the evil of some mens hearts by special Occasions to effect his purpose; we cannot suppose that Christ can be guilty of any Crime that deserved Death by the *Jewish* Law; had he been so a Criminal, he could not have been a Redeemer: A perfect Innocence was necessary to the design of his coming. Had God himself put him to that Death, without using Instruments of Wickedness in it, by some remarkable hand from Heaven, the Innocence of his Nature had been for ever eclipsed, and the voluntariness of his Sacrifice had been obscur'd: The strangeness of such a Judgment would have made his innocence incredible; he could not reasonably have been propos'd as an Object of Faith; What, to believe in one that was struck dead by a hand from Heaven? The propagation of the Doctrine of Redemption had wanted a Foundation; and though God might have raised him again, the certainty of his Death had been as questionable as his Innocence in dying, had he not been raised. But God orders every thing so, as to answer his own most wise and holy ends, and maintain his Truth, and the fulfilling the Predictions of the minutest Concerns about them, and all this by presenting Occasions innocent in themselves, which the Corruptions of the *Jews* took hold of, and whereby God, unknown to them, brought about his own Decrees: And may not this be conceived without any taint upon God's Holiness; for when there are Seeds of all sin in mans Nature, why may not God hinder the sprouting up of this or that kind of Seed, and leave liberty to the growth of the other, and shut up other ways of sinning, and restrain men from them, and let them loose to that Temptation which he intends to serve himself of, hiding from them those Objects which were not so serviceable to his purpose, wherein they would have sinned, and offer others, which he knew their Corruption would use ill, and were serviceable to his ends; since the depravation of their Natures would necessarily hurry them to evil without restraining Grace, as a Scale will necessarily rise up when the weight in it, which kept it down, is taken away?

7. Proposition: *The Holiness of God is not blemish'd by withdrawing his Grace from a sinful Creature, whereby he falls into more sin.* That God withdraws his Grace from men, and gives them up sometimes to the fury of their Lusts, is as clear in Scripture as any thing; *Deut. 29. 4. Yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, &c.* *Judas* was delivered to *Satan* after the Sop, and put into his power for despising former Admonitions. He often leaves the Reins to the Devil, that he may use what efficacy he can in those that have offended the Majesty of God; he withholds further influences of Grace, or withdraws what before he had granted them. Thus he withheld that Grace from the Sons of *Eli*, that might have made their Fathers pious Admonitions effectual to them, *1 Sam. 2. 25. They hearkned not to the voice of their Father, because the Lord would slay them.* He gave Grace to *Eli* to reprove them, and withheld that Grace from them, which might have enabled them against their natural Corruption and obstinacy to receive that Reproof.

But the Holiness of God is not blemish'd by this.

† *Tessard. de*  
*natur. & grat.*  
*Thom. 15. 151.*  
*Amy. 87*  
*divers Texts,*  
*p 311.*

1. *Because the act of God in this is only negative* †. Thus God is said to *harden* men: Not by positive hardning, or working any thing in the Creature, but by not working, not softening, leaving a man to the hardness of his own heart, whereby it is unavoidable by the depravation of mans Nature, and the fury of his Passions, but that he should be further hardned, and *increase unto more ungodliness*, as the Expression is *2 Tim. 2. 16.* As a man is said to give another his life, when he doth not take it away when it lay at his mercy; so God is said to *harden* a man, when he doth not mollifie him when it was in his power, and inwardly quicken



quicken him with that Grace whereby he might infallibly avoid any further provoking of him. God is said to harden men, when he removes not from them the Incentives to sin, curbs not those Principles, which are ready to comply with those Incentives, withdraws the common assistances of his Grace, concurs not with counsels and admonitions to make them effectual; flasheth not in the convincing light which he darted upon them before. If hardness follows upon God's withholding his softening Grace, 'tis not by any positive act of God, but from the natural hardness of Man. If you put Fire near to Wax or Rosin, both will melt, but when that Fire is removed, they return to their natural quality of hardness and brittleness; the positive act of the Fire is to melt and soften, and the softness of the Rosin is to be ascribed to that, but the hardness is from the Rosin it self, wherein the Fire hath no influence, but only a negative act by a removal of it: So when God hardens a man, he only leaves him to that stony heart which he derived from *Adam*, and brought with him into the world. All mens understandings being blinded, and their wills perverted in *Adam*, God's withdrawing his Grace, is but a leaving them to their natural pravity, which is the cause of their further sinning, and not God's removal of that special light he before afforded them, or restraint he held over them. As when God withdraws his preserving Power from the Creature, he is not the *efficient*, but *deficient* cause of the Creatures destruction; so in this case, God only ceaseth to bind and damm up that sin which else would break out.

2. *The whole positive cause of this hardness is from mans corruption.* God infuseth not any sin into his Creatures, but forbears to infuse his Grace & restrain their Lusts, which upon the removal of his Grace work impetuously: God only gives them up to that, which he knows will work strongly in their hearts. And therefore the *Apostle* wipes off from God any positive act in that uncleanness the *Heathens* were given up to (*Rom. 1. 24. Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts.* And verse 26. God gave them up to vile affections; but they were their own affections, none of Gods inspiring) by adding, *through the lusts of their own Hearts*: Gods giving them up was the Logical cause, or a cause by way of Argument; their own Lusts were the true and natural cause; their own they were, before they were given up to them; and belonging to none as the Author, but themselves, after they were given up to them. The Lust in the Heart, and the temptation without, easily close and mix interests with one another: As the Fire in a Coal pit will with the fuell, if the streams derived into it for the quenching it, be dam'd up: The naturall Passions will run to a temptation, as the Waters of a River tumble towards the Sea. When a man that hath bridled in a high mettled-Horse from running out, gives him the Rains; or a Huntsman takes off the string that held the Dog, and lets him run after the Hare; are they the immediate cause of the motion of the one, or the other? no, but the mettle and strength of the Horse, and the natural inclination of the Hound, both which are left to their own motions to pursue their own natural instincts. Man doth as naturally tend to sin as a stone to the Center, or as a weighty thing inclines to a motion to the Earth: 'Tis from the propension of mans nature that he *drinks up iniquity like water*; and God doth no more when he leaves a man to sin, by taking away the Hedge which stoppt him, but leave him to his natural Inclination. As a man that breaks up a damm he hath placed, leaves the Streams to run in their natural Channel; or one that takes away a prop from a Stone to let it fall, leaves it only to that nature which inclines it to a descent; both have their motion from their own Nature, and man his Sin from his own Corruption.\* The withdrawing the Sun-beams,

\* Amyrald. de  
predest. p. 107.



that root; mans free-will was the cause of the first sin, and the corruption of his nature by it the cause of all succeeding sins. God doth not immediately harden any man, but doth propose those things, from whence the natural Vice of man takes an occasion to strengthen and nourish itself: Hence God is said to *harden Pharaoh's Heart* ||, by concurring with the *Magicians* in turning their rods into Serpents, which stiffened his Heart against *Moses*, conceiving him by reason of that to have no more power than other men, and was an occasion of his further hardning: And \* *Exod. 8. 32. Pharaoh is said to harden himself*\*, that is, in regard of his own natural passion.

3. *God is holy and righteous, because he doth not withdraw from man, till man deserts him*: To say that God withdrew that Grace from *Adam*, which he had afforded him in Creation, or any thing that was due to him, till he had abused the Gifts of God, and turned them to an end contrary to that of Creation, would be a reflection upon the Divine Holiness: God was first deserted by man before man was deserted by God; and man doth first condemn and abuse the common Grace of God, and those reliques of natural light that *enlighten every man that comes into the World*†, before God leaves him to the hurry of his own Passions *Ephraim* was first joyned to *Idols*, before God pronounced the fatal sentence, *Let him alone*||: And the *Heathens* first *changed the glory of the incorruptible God*, before God withdrew his common Grace from the corrupted creature\*; and they first *served the Creature more then the Creator*, before the Creator gave them up to the slavish Chains of their vile affections†. *Israel* first cast off God before God cast off them, but then *he gave them up to their own Hearts Lusts*, and they walked in their own Counsels, *Psa. 81. 11, 12.* Since sin entred into the World by the fall of *Adam*, and the blood of all his posterity was tainted, Man cannot do any thing that is formally good; not for want of faculties, but for the want of a righteous habit in those faculties, especially in the Will; yet God discovers himself to man in the works of his hands; he hath left in him footsteps of natural reason, he doth attend him with common motions of his Spirit, corrects him for his faults with gentle Chastisements. He is neer unto all in some kind of Instructions: He puts many times providential bars in their way of sinning; but when they will rush in to it as the *Horse into the battle*, when they will rebell against the light, God doth often leave them to their own course, sentence him that is *filthy to be filthy still*||, which is a righteous act of God, as he is Rector and Governor of the World. Man's not receiving, or not improving what God gives, is the cause of Gods not giving further, or taking away his own, which before he had bestowed; This is so far from being repugnant to the Holiness and Righteousness of God, that it is rather a commendable act of his Holiness and Righteousness, as the Rector of the World, not to let those gifts continue in the hand of a man who abuses them contrary to his glory. Who will blame a Father, that after all the good Counsels he hath given his Son to reclaim him, all the Corrections he hath inflicted on him for his irregular practice, leaves him to his own courses and withdraws those assistances which he scold at and turned the deaf Ear unto? Or who will blame the *Physician* for deserting the Patient, who rejects his Counsel, will not follow his Prescriptions, but dasheth his Physick against the Wall? No man will blame him, no man will say that he is the cause of the Patients death, but the true cause is the fury of the Distemper, and the obstinacy of the diseased Person to which the Physician left him. And who can justly blame God in this case, who yet never denied supplies of Grace to any that sincerely sought it at his hands; and what man is there that lies under a hardness, but first was guilty of very provoking sins? What unholiness is it to deprive men of those assistances because of their sin, and afterwards to direct those counsels and practices of theirs which he hath justly given them up unto, to serve the ends of his own glory in his own methods?

4. Which will appear further by considering, that *God is not oblig'd to continue his Grace to them*. It was at his liberty whither he could give any renewing Grace to *Adam* after his fall, or to any of his Posterity: He was at his own liberty to withhold it or communicate it: But if he were under any Obligation then, surely he must be under less now, since the multiplication of Sin by his Creatures: But

if



if the Obligation were none just after the fall, there is no pretence now to fasten any such Obligation on God. That God had no Obligation at first hath been spoken to before: He is less obliged to continue his Grace after a repeated refusal, and a peremptory abuse, than he was bound to proffer it after the first Apostacy. God cannot be charg'd with unholiness in withdrawing his Grace after we have received it, unless we can make it appear that his Grace was a thing due to us, as we are his Creatures, and as he is Governor of the World. What Prince looks upon himself as oblig'd to reside in any particular place of his Kingdom? But suppose he be bound to inhabit in one particular City, yet after the City rebels against him, is he bound to continue his Court there, spend his Revenue among Rebels, endanger his own Honour and Security, enlarge their Charter, or maintain their Ancient Priviledges? Is it not most just and righteous for him to withdraw himself and leave them to their own Tumultuousness and Sedition, whereby they should eat the fruit of their own doings? If there be an Obligation on God as a Governor, it would rather lie on the side of Justice, to leave Man to the Power of the Devil whom he courted, and the prevalency of those Lusts he hath so often carested, and wrap up in a Cloud all his common Illuminations, and leave him destitute of all common workings of his Spirit.

8. Proposition. *Gods Holiness is not blemish'd, by his commanding those things sometimes which seem to be against Nature, or thwart some other of his Precepts.* As when God commanded *Abraham* with his own hand to Sacrifice his Son\*, there was nothing of Unrighteousness in it. God hath a *Sovereign Dominion* over the lives and beings of his creatures, whereby as he creates one day, he might annihilate the next; and by the same right that he might demand the life of *Isaac*, as being his Creature, he might demand the Obedience of *Abraham* in a ready return of that to him, which he had so long enjoy'd by his grant. 'Tis true, killing is unjust when it is done without cause, and by a private Authority: But the Authority of God surmounts all private and Publick Authority whatsoever. Our lives are due to him when he calls for them, and they are more than once forfeit to him by reason of Transgression. But howsoever the case is, God commanded him to do it for the trial of his Grace, but suffered him not to do it in favour to his ready Obedience: But had *Isaac* been actually slain and offer'd, how had it been unrighteous in God, who enacts Laws for the Regulation of his Creature, but never intended them to the prejudice of the Rights of his Sovereignty? Another Case is that of the *Israelites borrowing Jewels of the Egyptians* by the order of God†. Is not God Lord of mans goods, as well as their lives? What have any, they have not received? & that not as Proprietors independent on God, but his Stewards, and may not he demand a portion of his Steward to bestow upon his Favourite? He that had power to dispose of the *Egyptians* Goods, had power to order the *Israelites* to ask them. Besides, God acted the part of a just Judge in ordering them their wages for their Service in this method, and making their Task-masters give them some recompence for their unjust oppression so many years: It was a Command from God therefore, rather for the preservation of Justice, (the Basis of all those Laws which link human Society) than any infringement of it. It was a material recompence in part, though not a formal one in the intention of the *Egyptians*: It was but in part a recompence; It must needs come short of the damage the poor Captives had sustained by the tyranny of their Masters, who had enslav'd them contrary to the rules of hospitality; and could not make amends for the lives of the poor Infants of *Israel*, whom they had drowned in the River. He that might for the unjust oppression of his People have taken away all their Lives, destroy'd the whole Nation, and put the *Israelites* into the possession of their Lands, could without any unrighteousness dispose of part of their Goods: And it was rather an act of Clemency to leave them some part, who had doubly forfeited all. Again, the *Egyptians* were as ready to lend by Gods influence, as the *Israelites* were to ask by Gods order: And though it was a loan, God as Sovereign of the World, and Lord of the Earth and the fulness thereof, alienated the property by assuming them to the use of the Tabernacle, to which service most, if not all of them, were afterwards dedicated. God who is Lawgiver hath power

\* Gen. 22. 2.

† Exod. 11. 2. 3.  
Exod. 12. 35.



to dispence with his own Law, and make use of his own Goods and dispose of them as he pleases. 'Tis no unholiness in God to dispose of that which he hath a right unto. Indeed God cannot command that which is in its own nature intrinsically evil; as to command a rational Creature not to love him, not to worship him, to call God to witness to a Lye; these are intrinsically evil; but for the disposing of the Lives and Goods of his Creatures, which they have from him in right, and not in absolute propriety, is not evil in him, because there is no repugnancy in his own Nature to such acts, nor is it any thing inconsistent with the natural duty of a Creature, and in such cases he may use what instruments he please.

The Point was, That *Holiness is a glorious perfection of the nature of God.* We have shew'd the Nature of this Holiness in God; what it is, and we have demonstrated it, and proved that God is holy, and must needs be so, and also the purity of his Nature in all his acts about sin: Let us now improve it by way of Use.

Use.

Is holiness a transcendent perfection, belonging to the Nature of God? The first Use shall be of Instruction and Formation.

1. How great and how frequent is the contempt of this eminent perfection in the Deity? Since the fall, this attribute, which renders God most amiable in himself, renders him most hateful to his Apostate Creature. 'Tis impossible that he that loves iniquity, can affect that which is irreconcilably contrary to the iniquity he loves. Nothing so contrary to the sinfulness of man as the Holiness of God, and nothing is thought of by the sinner with so much detestation. How do Men account that which is the most glorious perfection of the divinity, unworthy to to be regarded as an accomplishment of their own Souls? And when they are pressed to an imitation of it, and a detestation of what is contrary to it, have the same sentiments in their Heart which the Devil had in his Language to Christ. *Why art thou come to torment us before our time?* What an enmity the World naturally hath to this perfection, I think is visible in the practice of the Heathen, who among all their Heroes which they deified, elevated none to that dignity among them for this or that moral Vertue that came nearest to it, but for their valour or some usefulness in the concerns of this Life. *Æsculapius* was deified for his skill in the cure of Diseases; *Bacchus* for the use of the grape; *Vulcan* for his operations by Fire; *Hercules* for his destroying of Tyrants and Monsters; but none for their meer Vertue: As if any thing of purity were unworthy their consideration in the frame of a Deity, when it is the glory of all other Perfections: So essential it is, that when Men reject the imitation of this, God regards it as a total rejection of himself, though they own all the other attributes of his Nature; *Psal. 81. 11. Israel would none of me; why? because they walked not in his ways, Vers. 13.* those ways wherein the purity of the Divine nature was most conspicuous: They would own him in his Power, when they stood in need of a Deliverance; they would own him in his Mercy, when they were plung'd in Distress; but they would not imitate him in his Holiness. This being the lustre of the Divine Nature, the contempt of it is an obscuring all his other Perfections, and a dashing a blot upon his whole Scutcheon. To own all the rest, and deny him this, is to frame him as an unbeautiful Monster, a Deformed power. Indeed, all sin is against this attribute; all sin aims in general at the being of God, but in particular at the Holiness of his Being: All sin is a violence to this perfection: There is not an Iniquity in the World, but directs its venomous sting against the divine purity: Some sins are directed against his Omniscience, as secret Wickedness; some against his Providence, as distrust; some against his Mercy, as unbelief; some against his Wisdom, as neglecting the means instituted by him, censuring his ways and actions; some against his Power, as trusting in means more than in God, and the immoderate fear of Men more than of God; some against his Truth, as distrusting his Promise, or not fearing his Threatning; but all agree together in their enmity against this, which is the peculiar glory of the Deity. Every one of them is a receding from the Divine Image; and the blackness of every one is the deeper, by how much the distance of it from the holiness of God is the greater. This contrariety to the Holiness of God is the cause of all the absolute Atheism (if there be any such) in the World; What was the reason *the Fool hath said in his heart, there is no God?* but because the Fool



is corrupt and hath done horrible works\*. If they believe the being of a God, <sup>\* Psal. 13. 1</sup> their own Reason will force them to imagine him holy\*. Therefore rather than fancy a holy God, they would fain fancy none at all.

In particular,

1. *The Holiness of God is injur'd, in unworthy representations of God, and imaginations of him in our own minds.* The Heathen fell under this guilt, and ascribed to their Idols those Vices which their own Sensuality inclin'd them to, unworthy of a man, much more unworthy of a God, that they might find a protection of their Crimes in the practice of their Idols. But is this only the notion of the Heathens? may there not be many among us whose love to their Lusts, and desires of sinning without controul, move them to slander God in their thoughts rather than reform their lives, and are ready to frame by the power of their imaginative faculty, a God not only winking, but smiling at their Impurities? I am sure God charges the Impieties of Men upon this score, in that *Psalm*, (*Psa. 50. 21.*) which seems to be a representation of the day of Judgment, as some gather from *Verse 6*. When God sums up all together, *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence, thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thy self; not a deteller, but approver of thy crimes.* And the *Psalmist* seems to express Gods loathing of sin in such a manner, as intimates it to be contrary to the Ideas and Resemblances Men make of him in their minds, *Psal. 5. 3* *For thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness.* As we say in vindication of a man, he is not such a man as you imagine him to be; Thou art not such a God as the World commonly imagines Thee to be, a God taking pleasure in iniquity. 'Tis too common for men to fancy God not as he is, but as they would have him; strip him of his excellency for their own security. As God made man after his Image, man would dress God after his own Modes, as may best sute the content of his Lusts, and encourage him in a course of sinning; For when they can frame such a notion of God, as if he were a Countenancer of sin, they will derive from thence a reputation to their Crimes, commit Wickedness with an unbounded licentiousness, and crown their Vices with the name of Vertues, because they are so like to the Sentiments of that God they fancy: From hence, as the *Psalmist* in the *Psalm* before mention'd, ariseth that mass of Vice in the World; such Conceptions are the Mother and Nurse of all Impiety, I question not but the first Spring is some wrong notion of God in regard of his holiness: We are as apt to imagine God as we would have him, as the black *Ethiopians* were to draw the Image of their Gods after their own dark hue, and paint him with their own Colour: As a *Philosopher* in *Theodore* speaks; if Oxen and Lions had hands, and could paint as men do, they would frame the Images of their Gods according to their own likeness and complexion: Such notions of God render him a Swinish Being, and worse than the vilest Idols ador'd by the *Egyptians*, when Men fancy a God indulgent to their Appetites, and most sordid Lusts.

2. *In defacing the Image of God in our own Souls.* God in the first draught of man conform'd him to his own Image, or made him an Image of himself: Because we find that in Regeneration this Image is renewed, *Eph. 4. 24. The new Man, which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness.* He did not take Angels for his Pattern in the first polishing the Soul, but himself. In defacing this Image we cast dirt upon the Holiness of God, which was his pattern in the framing of us; and rather chuse to be conformed to *Satan*, who is Gods grand Enemy, to have Gods Image wip'd out of us, and the Devils pictur'd in us: Therefore natural men in an unregenerate state may justly be called Devils, since our Saviour call'd the worst man, *Judas*, so\*, and *Peter*, one of the best †: And if this title be given <sup>\* John 6. 1.</sup> by an infallible Judge to one of the worst, and one of the best, it may without <sup>† Mat. 16. 23.</sup> wrong to any be ascrib'd to all men that wallow in their sin, which is directly contrary to that illustrious Image God did imprint upon them. How often is it seen that men controul the light of their own Nature, and stain the clearest beams of that Candle of the Lord in their own spirits, that fly in the face of their own Consciences, and say to them, as *Ahab* to *Micahab*, thou dost never prophecy good to me, thou dost never encourage me in those things that are pleasing to the Flesh; & use it at the same rate as the wicked King did the *Prophet*, imprison it in unrighteousness; † <sup>Rom. 1. 18.</sup> Because it stirs up in them sometimes Sentiments of the Holiness of God, which it repre-



represents in the Soul of man. How jolly are many men when the exhalations of their Sensitive part rise up to Cloud the exactest Principle of moral Nature in their minds, and render the monstrous Principles of the Law of Corruption more lively? Whence ariseth the wickedness which hath been committed with an open face in the World, and the applause that hath been often given to the worst of villanies? Have we not known among our selves, men to glory in their shame, & esteem that a most gentle accomplishment of man, which is the greatest blot upon his Nature, and which if it were upon God, would render him no God, but an impure Devil, so that to be a Gentleman among us hath been the same as to be an incarnate Devil? and to be a man, was to be no better, but worse than a Brute? Vile Wretches! Is not this a contempt of Divine holiness, to kill that Divine seed which lies languishing in the midst of corrupted Nature; to cut up any Sprouts of it as weeds unworthy to grow in their gardens, & cultivate what is the Seed of Hell? prefer the rotten fruits of *Sodom*, mark with a Divine curse, before those Relicks of the fruits of *Eden*, of Gods own planting?

3. The Holiness of God is injur'd in charging our sin upon God. Nothing is more, natural to men, than to seek excuses for their sin, & transfer it from themselves to the next at hand; and rather than fail, shift it upon God himself; and if they can bring God into a society with them in sin, they will hug themselves in a security that God cannot punish that guilt, wherein he is a Partner: *Adam's* Children are not of a different disposition from *Adam* himself, who after he was Arraign'd and brought to his Trial, boggles not at flinging his dirt in the face of God his Creator, and accuseth him as if he had given him the Woman, not to be his help, but his ruine *Gen. 3. 12. And the man said, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the Tree and I did eat.* He never supplicates for Pardon, nor seeks a remedy, but reflects his Crime upon God; Had I been alone, as I was first created, I had not eaten, but the woman whom I received as a special gift from thee, hath proved my tempter and my bane. When man could not be like God in Knowledge, he endeavour'd to make God like him in his Crime; and when his Ambition failed of equallizing himself with God, he did with an insolence too common to corrupted Nature, attempt by the imputation of his sin, to equal the Divinity with himself. Some think *Cain* had the same sentiment in his answer to Gods demand, Where his brother was, *Gen. 2. 9. Am I my brother's keeper?* Art not thou the Keeper and Governor of the World, why didst not thou take care of him, and hinder my killing him, and drawing this guilt upon my self, and terror upon my Conscience? *David* was not behind, when after the murder of *Uriah*, he sweeps the dirt from his own door to Gods, *Sam. 2. 11. 25. The sword devoureth one as well as another;* Fathering that solely upon Divine Providence, which was his own wicked Contrivance: Though afterwards he is more ingenuous in clearing God, and charging himself, *Psal. 51. 4. Against thee, thee only have I sinned;* and he clears God in his Judgment too. 'Tis too common for the foolishness of man to pervert his way, and then his heart frets against the Lord, *Pro. 19. 3.* He studies mischief, runs in a way of sin, and when he hath conjur'd up troubles to himself by his own folly, he excuseth himself, and with indignation charges God as the Author both of his sin and misery, and sets his mouth against the Heavens. 'Tis a more horrible thing to accuse God as a Principal or Accessory in our guilt, than to conceive him to be a favourer of our iniquity; yet both are bad enough.

4. The Holiness of God is injured, when men will study Arguments from the holy word of God to Colour & shelter their Crimes. When men will seek for a shelter for their Lies, in that of the Midwives to preserve the Children, or in that of *Rahab* to save the Spies; as if because God rewarded their fidelity, he countenanc'd their sin. How often is Scripture wrested to be a plea for unbecoming practises, that God in his Word may be imagin'd a Patron for their Iniquity? 'Tis not unknown that some have maintain'd their quaffing and carousing from *Eccles. 8. 11. That a man hath no better thing under the Sun, than to eat and drink and be merry:* And their Gluttony from *Matth. 5. 11 That which goes into the belly, defiles not a man.* The *Jesuits* morals are a transcript of this. How often hath the Passion of our Saviour, the highest expression of Gods holiness, been employ'd to stain it, & encourage the most debauched practises? Grace hath been turn'd into wantonness & the abundance of grace been us'd as a blast to increase the flames of sin; as if God had no other aim in that work of Redemption, but to discover himself more indulgent to our Sensual Appetites,

and



and by his Severity with his Son, become more gracious to our Lusts: This is to seed the Roots of Hell with the Dews of Heaven, to make Grace a Pandor for the abuse of it, and to employ the Expressions of his Holiness in his Word to be a Sword against the essential Holiness of his Nature: As if a man should draw an Apology for his Treason out of that Law that was made to forbid, not to protect his Rebellion. Not the meanest Instrument in the Temple was to be alienated from the use it was by Divine Order appointed to, nor was it to be employed in any common use; and shall the Word of God, which is the Image of his Holiness, be transfer'd by base Interpretations to be an Advocate for Iniquity? such an ill use of his Word reflects upon that Hand which imprinted those Characters of Purity and Righteousness upon it: As the mis-interpretation of the wholesome Laws of a Prince, made to discourage Debauchery, reflects upon his righteousness and sincerity in enacting them.

5. The Holiness of God is injured, *when men will put up Petitions to God to favour them in a wicked Design.* Such there are, and tax by the *Apostle, James 4. 3. Ye ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your Lusts*: who desired Mercies from God, with an intent to make them Instruments of Sin, and Weapons of Unrighteousness; as it is reported of a Thief, that he always pray'd for the success of his Robbery. It hath not been rare in the World to appoint Fasts and Prayers for success in Wars manifestly unjust, and commenc'd upon breaches of Faith. Many Covetous men petition God to prosper them in their unjust gain; as if the blessed God sat in his pure Majesty upon a Throne of Grace, to espouse unjust practices, and make Iniquity prosperous. There are such as *offer Sacrifice with an evil mind*\*, to barter with God for a Divine Blessing to spirit a wicked contrivance. How great a contempt of the Holiness of God is this? How inexcusable would it be for a Favourite to address himself to a just Prince with this Language? Sir, I desire a Boon of such Lands that lye near me, for an addition to my Estate, that I may have supports for my Debauchery, and be able to play the Villain more powerfully among my Neighbours. Hereby he implies that his Prince is a Friend to such Crimes and Wickedness he intends his Petition for. Is not this the language of many mens hearts in the immediate presence of God? The Order of Prayer runs thus, *Hallowed be thy Name*; first to have a deep sense of the Holiness of the Divine Nature, and an ardent desire for the glory of it: This Order is inverted by asking those things which are not agreeable to the Will of God; nor meet for us to ask, nor meet for God to give; or asking things agreeable to the Will of God, but with a wicked intention: This is, in effect, to desire God to strip himself of his Holiness, and commit Sacrilege upon his own Nature to gratifie our Lusts.

\* Prov. 21. 27.

6. The Purity of God is contemned, *in hating and scoffing at the holiness which is in a Creature.* Whoever looks upon the holiness of a Creature as an unlovely thing, can have no good Opinion of the amiableness of Divine Purity. Whoever hates those qualities and graces that resemble God in any person, must needs condemn the Original Pattern, which is more eminent in God. If there be no comeliness in a Creature's holiness, to render it grateful to us, we should say of God himself, were he visible among us, with those in the *Prophet, Isa. 53. There is no beauty in him that we should desire him*: Holiness is beautiful in it self. If God be the most lovely Being, that which is a likeness to him, so far as it doth resemble him, must needs be amiable, because it partakes of God: And therefore those that see no beauty in an inferiour holiness, but condemn it because it is a Purity above them, condemn God much more: He that hates that which is imperfect merely for that excellency which is in it, doth much more hate that which is perfect, without any mixture or stain. Holiness being the glory of God, the peculiar Title of the Deity, and from him derived unto the Nature of a Creature; he that mocks this in a Person, derides God himself; and when he cannot abuse the Purity in the Deity, he will do it in his Image. As Rebels that cannot wrong the King in his Person, will do it in his Picture, and his Subjects that are Loyal to him: He that hates the Picture of a Man, hates the Person represented by it much more; he that hates the Beams, hates the Sun; the holiness of a Creature is but a Beam from that Infinite Sun, a Stream from that Eternal Fountain. Where there is

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a derision of the Purity of any Creature, there is a greater reflection upon God in that derision, as he is the Author of it. If a mixed and stained holiness be more the subject of any mans Scoff, than a great deal of Sin, that Person hath a disposition more roundly to scoff at God himself, should he appear in that unblemish'd and unspotted Purity which infinitely shines in his Nature. O! 'tis a dangerous thing to scoff and deride holiness in any person, though never so mean; Such do deride and scoff at the most holy God.

7. The Holiness of God is injur'd by our *unprepared addressees to him*, when like Swine, we come into the presence of God with all our mire reeking and steaming upon us. A holy God requires a holy Worship: And if our best Duties, having filth in every part, as perform'd by us, are unmeet for God; how much more unsuitable are dead and dirty Duties to a living and immense Holiness? Slight approaches and drossy frames speak us to have imaginations of God as of a slight and fortifish Being: This is worse than the Heathens practis'd, who would purge their Flesh before they Sacrific'd, and make some preparations in a seeming Purity, before they would enter into their Temples. God is *so holy*, that were our Services as refin'd as those of Angels, we could not present him with a Service meet for his *holy Nature* \*. We condemn then this Perfection when we come before him without due preparation; as if God himself were of an impure Nature, and did not deserve our purest thoughts in our applications to him; as if any blemish'd and polluted Sacrifice were good enough for him, and his Nature deserv'd no better. When we excite not those elevated Frames of Spirit which are due to such a Being; when we think to put him off with a lame and imperfect Service, we worship him not according to the excellency of his Nature, but put a slight upon his Majestick Sanctity: When we nourish in our Duties those foolish Imaginations which creep upon us; when we bring into, and continue our worldly, carnal, debauch'd Fancies in his Presence, worse than the nasty Servants, or bemired Dogs, a man would blush to be attended with in his Visits to a neat Person. To be conversing with sordid Sensualities, when we are at the feet of an Infinite God, sitting upon the Throne of his Holiness, is as much a contempt of him, as it would be of a Prince, to bring a Vessel full of nasty Dung with us, when we come to present a Petition to him clothed in his Royal Robes. Or as it would have been to God, if the High Priest should have swept all the Blood and Excrements of the Sacrifices from the Foot of the Altar into the Holy of Holies, and heapt it up before the Mercy Seat, where the Presence of God dwelt *between the Cherubims*, and afterwards shovel'd it up into the Ark, to be lodged with *Aarons Rod* and the *Pot of Manna*.

8. God's Holiness is slighted in *depending upon our imperfect Services to bear us out before the Tribunal of God*. This is too ordinary: The *Jews* were often infected with it †, who not well understanding the enormity of their Transgressions; the interweaving of Sin with their Services, and the unspottedness of the Divine Purity, mingled an Opinion of Merit with their Sacrifices, and thought by the cutting the Throat of a Beast, and offering it upon God's Altar, they had made a sufficient Compensation to that Holiness they had offended. Not to speak of many among the *Romanists*, who have the same notion, thinking to make satisfaction to God, by erecting an Hospital, or endowing a Church, as if this injur'd Perfection could be contented with the Dregs of their Purfes, and the offering of an unjust *Mammon*, more likely to mind God of the Injury they have done him, than contribute to the appeasing of him. But is it not too ordinary with miserable men, whose Consciences accuse them of their Crimes, to rely upon the mumbling of a few formal Prayers, and in the strength of them to think to stand before the tremendous Tribunal of God, and meet with a Discharge upon this account from any Accusation this Divine Perfection can present against them? Nay, do not the best Christians sometimes find a Principle in them, that makes them stumble in their goings forth to Christ, and glorifying the Holiness of God in that method which he hath appointed? Sometimes casting an eye at their Grace, and sticking awhile to this or that Duty, and gazing at the glory of the Temple-building, while they should more admire the glorious Presence that fills it. What

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\* Josh. 24. 19.

† Rom. 3. 10.



is all this but a vilifying of the *Holiness* of the Divine Nature, as though it would be well enough contented with our Impurities and Imperfections, because they look like a Righteousness in our estimation? As though *Dross* and *Dung*, which are the Titles the *Apostle* gives to all the Righteousness of a Fallen Creature \*, \* Phil. 3. 2. were valuable in the sight of God, and sufficient to render us comely before him. 'Tis a Blasphemy against this Attribute, to pretend that any thing so imperfect, so daub'd, as the best of our Services are, can answer to that which is Infinitely Perfect, and be a ground of demanding Eternal Life: 'Tis at best, to set up a gilded *Digon* as a fit Companion for the *Ark* of his *Holiness*; our own Righteousness as a suitable Mate for the Righteousness of God: As if he had repented of the Claim he made by the Law to an exact conformity, and thrown off the Holiness of his Nature for the fondling of a Corrupted Creature. Rude and foolish Notions of the Divine Purity, are clearly evidenced by any confidence in any Righteousness of our own, though never so splendid. 'Tis a rendring the Righteousness of God, as dull and obscure as that of Men; a meer Out-side, as their own: As blind as the Heathens pictur'd their *Fortune*, that knew as little how to discern the Nature and value of the Offerings made to her, as to distribute her gifts, as if it were all one to them, to have a *Dog* or a *Lamb* presented in Sacrifice. As if God did not well understand his own Nature, when he enacted so Holy a Law, and strengthened it with so severe a Threatning; which must follow upon our Conceit, that he will accept a Righteousness lower than that, which bears some suitability to the *Holiness* of his own Nature, and that of his Law; and that he could easily be put off with a pretended and counterfeit Service. What are the Services of the generality of Men, but Suppositions, that they can bribe God to an Indulgence of them in their Sins, and by an Oral Sacrifice, cause him to devett himself of his Hatred of their former Iniquities, and countenance their following Practices. As the *Harlot*, that would return fresh to her Unclean-ness, upon the confidence that her *Peace Offerings* had contented the Righteousness of God †: As though a small Service could make him wink at our Sins, † Prov. 7. 13. and lay aside the Glory of his Nature; when alas, the best Duties in the most gracious Persons in this life, are but as the steams of a Spiced Dunghil, a composition of Myrrh and Froth, since there are swarms of Corruptions in their Nature, and secret Sins that they need a cleansing from.

9. 'Tis a contemning the *Holiness* of God, when we charge the Law of God with rigidity. We cast Durt upon the *Holiness* of God, when we blame the Law of God, because it shackles us, and prohibits our desired Pleasures; and hate the Law of God, as they did the *Prophets*, because they did not *Prophecy smooth things*; but called to them, to get them out of the way, and turn aside out of the path, and cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before them, *Isai. 30. 10, 11.* Put us no more in mind of the *Holiness* of God, and the *Holiness* of his Law: 'tis a troublesome thing for us to hear of it: Let him be gone from us, since he will not countenance our Vices, and indulge our Crimes; We would rather hear there is no God, than you should tell us of a Holy one. We are contrary to the Law, when we wish it were not so exact; and therefore contrary to the *Holiness* of God, which set the stamp of *Exactness* and *Righteousness* upon it. We think him Injurious to our Liberty, when by his Precept he thwarts our Pleasure; we wish it of another frame, more mild, more suitable to our Minds: 'Tis the same, as if we should openly blame God for consulting with his own Righteousness, and not with our Humors, before he settled his Law; that he should not have drawn it from the depths of his Righteous Nature, but squar'd it to accommodate our Corruption.

This being the language of such Complaints, is a reproving God, because he would not be Unholy, that we might be Unrighteous with Impunity. Had the Divine Law been suted to our Corrupt state, God must have been Unholy to have complied with his Rebellious Creature. To charge the Law with rigidity, either in Language or Practice, is the highest contempt of Gods *Holiness*; for it is an Implicit Wish, that God were as defil'd, polluted, disorderly, as our Corrupted Selves.



10, The Holiness of God is injur'd *Opinionatively*.

(1.) *In the Opinion of Venial sins.* The Romanists divide Sins into *Venial* and *Mortal*: *Mortal*, are those which deserve Eternal Death; *Venial*, the lighter sort of Sins, which rather deserve to be pardon'd than punish'd; or if punish'd, not with an Eternal, but Temporal Punishment. This Opinion hath no foundation in, but is contrary to Scripture. How can any Sin be in its own nature Venial, when the due Wages of every Sin is death, Rom. 6.23. and he, who continues not in every thing that the Law commands, falls under a Curse? Gal. 3. 10. 'Tis a mean thought of the Holiness and Majesty of God to imagine, that any Sin which is against an Infinite Majesty, and as Infinite a Purity both in the Nature of God and the Law of God, should not be considered as infinitely hainous. All Sins are Transgressions of the Eternal Law, and in every one the Infinite Holiness of God is some way slighted.

(2.) *In the Opinion of Works of Supererogation.* That is, such Works as are not commanded by God, which yet have such a dignity and worth in their own nature, that the Performers of them do not only merit at Gods hands for themselves, but fill up a Treasure of Merits for others, that come short of fulfilling the Precepts God hath enjoyn'd. 'Tis such a mean thought of Gods Holiness, that the Jews, in all the Charges brought against them in Scripture, were never guilty of. And if you consider what pitiful things they are, which are within the compass of such Works, you have sufficient reason to bewail the Ignorance of Man, and the low esteem he hath of so glorious a Perfection. The Whipping themselves often in a Week, extraordinary Watchings, Fastings, Macerating their Bodies, wearing a *Capuchins* Habit, &c. are pitiful things to give content to an Infinite Purity. As if the Precept of God requir'd only the Inferiour degrees of Vertue, and the Counsels the more high and excellent; as if the Law of God, which the Psalmist counts perfect†, did not command all Good, and forbid all Evil; as if the Holiness of God had forgotten it self in the framing the Law, and made it a scanty and defective Rule; and the Righteousness of a Creature were not only able to make an Eternal Righteousness, but surmount it. As Man would be at first as knowing as God, so some of his Posterity would be more holy than God; set up a Wisdom against the Wisdom of God, and a Purity above the Divine Purity. Adam was not so presumptuous, he intended no more than an equalling God in Knowledge; but those would exceed him in Righteousness, and not only presume to render a Satisfaction for themselves to the Holiness they have injur'd, but to make a Purse for the supply of others that are Indigent, that they may stand before the Tribunal of God with a Confidence in the Imaginary Righteousness of a Creature. How horrible is it for those that come short of the Law of God themselves, to think that they can have enough for a Loan to their Neighbours? An unworthy Opinion,

2. Information. It may Inform us, how great is our Fall from God, and how distant we are from him. View the Holiness of God, and take a prospect of the Nature of Man, and be astonished to see a Person created in the Divine Image, degenerated into the Image of the Devil. We are as far fallen from the Holiness of God, which consists in a Hatred of Sin, as the lowest Point of the Earth is from the highest Point of the Heavens. The Devil is not more fallen from the rectitude of his Nature and likeness to God, than we are; and that we are not in the same condition with those Apostate Spirits, is not from any thing in our Nature, but from the Mediation of Christ, upon which account God hath indulged in us a continuance of some Remainders of that which Satan is wholly deprived of. We are departed from our Original Pattern; we were created to live the life of God, that is, a life of Holiness; but now we are alienated from the life of God\*, and of a beautiful piece we are become deformed, daub'd over with the most defiling Mud: We work uncleanness with greediness, according to our ability, as Creatures; as God doth work Holiness with affection and ardency, according to his Infiniteness, as Creator. More distant we are from God by reason of Sin, than the vilest Creature, the most deform'd Toad or poysonous Serpent is from the highest and most glorious Angel. By forsaking our Innocence, we departed from God as our Original Copy. The Apostle might well say, Rom. 3.23. that by Sin we are come short of the glory of God. Interpreters trouble themselves much about that place, *Man is come short of the glory of God*, that

† Psalm 19.7.

\* Eph. 4.18.



that is, of the *Holiness* of God, which is the glory of the Divine Nature, and was pictur'd in the Rational, Innocent Creature. By the *Glory of God*, is meant the *Holiness* of God: As 1 Cor. 3. 18. *Beholding, as in a glass, the Glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same Image from glory to glory*; that is the Glory of God in the Text, into the Image of which we are changed; but the Scripture speaks of no other Image of God, but that of *Holiness*: *We are come short of the glory of God*; of the *Holiness* of God, which is the glory of God; and the *Image* of it, which was the glory of Man. By Sin, which is particular in opposition to the *Purity* of God, Man was left many Leagues behind any resemblance to God; he stript off that which was the glory of his Nature, and was the only means of glorifying God as his Creator. The word *ἀσέβεια*, the *Apostle* uses, is very significant, *Postpon'd* by Sin an infinite distance from any imitation of Gods Holiness, or any appearance before him in a garb of Nature pleasing to him. Let us lament our Fall, and distance from God.

3. Information. *All Unholiness is vile and opposite to the Nature of God.* 'Tis such a loathsome thing, that the *Purity of Gods eye is averse from beholding*, *Ilab. 1. 3.* 'Tis not said there, that he *will not*, but he *cannot* look on Evil; there cannot be any amicableness between God and Sin, the Natures of both are so directly and unchangeably contrary to one another. *Holiness* is the Life of God, it endures as long as his Life; He must be Eternally averse from Sin, he can live no longer than he lives in the hatred and loathing of it. If he should for one instant cease to hate it, he would cease to live. To be a Holy God is as Essential to him, as to be a Living God; and he would not be a living, but a dead God, if he were in the least point of Time an Unholy God. He cannot look on Sin without loathing it, he cannot look on Sin but his Heart riseth against it: It must needs be most odious to him, as that which is against the glory of his Nature, and directly opposite to that which is the lustre and varnish of all his other Perfections. 'Tis the *Abominable thing which his Soul hates*, Jer. 44. 4. the vilest terms imaginable are used to signify it: Do you understand the loathsomeness of a *miry Swine*, or the nauseousness of the *vomit of a Dog*? These are Emblems of Sin†. Can you endure the steams of putrified Carcasses from an *open Sepulchre*\*? Is the smell of the *stinking sweat* or Excrements of a Body delightful? the word *ῥυτίς* in *James* 1. 21. signifies as much. Or is the sight of a Body overgrown with *Scabs* and *Leprosie* grateful to you? So vile, so odious is Sin in the sight of God. 'Tis no light thing then to fly in the Face of God, to break his Eternal Law, to dash both the *Tables* in pieces, to trample the Transcript of Gods own Nature under our feet, to cherish that which is inconsistent with his Honour, to lift up our heels against the glory of his Nature, to joyn Issue with the Devil in stabbing his Heart, and depriving him of his life. Sin in every part of it is an opposition to the *Holiness* of God, and consequently an envying him a Being and Life, as well as a Glory. If Sin be such a thing, *ye that love the Lord, hate Evil*.

† 2 Pet. 2. 22.  
\* Rom. 3. 24.

4. Information. *Sin cannot escape a due Punishment.* A hatred of Unrighteousness, and consequently a will to punish it, is as Essential to God as a love of Righteousness. Since he is not as an *Heathen Idol*, but hath Eyes to see, and Purity to hate every Iniquity, he will have an Infinite Justice to punish whatsoever is against Infinite Holiness. As he loves every thing that is amiable, so he loaths every thing that is filthy, and that constantly without any change; his whole Nature is set against it, he abhors nothing but this. 'Tis not the Devils knowledge or activity that his Hatred is terminated in, but the Malice and Unholiness of his Nature; 'tis this only is the Object of his Severity: 'Tis in the recompence of this only, that there can be a manifestation of his Justice.

Sin must be punish'd; for,

1. *This Detestation of Sin must be manifested.* How should we certainly know his loathing of it, if he did not manifest by some act how ungrateful it is to him? As his love to Righteousness would not appear, without rewarding it; so his hatred of Iniquity would be as little evidenc'd, without punishing it: His *Justice* is the great Witness to his *Purity*. The Punishment therefore inflicted on the Wicked shall be, in some respect, as great as the Rewards bestow'd upon the Righteous.

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Since the hatred of Sin is natural to God, 'tis as natural to him to shew one time or other his hatred of it. And since Men have a conceit that God is like them in Impurity, there is a necessity of some manifestation of himself to be Intimately distant from those Conceits they have of him, *Psal. 50. 21. I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.* He would else encourage the Injuries done to his Holiness, favour the Extravagances of the Creature, and condemn, or at least slight the Righteousness, both of his own Nature and his Sovereign Law. What way is there for God to manifest this Hatred, but by Threatning the Sinner: and what would this be but a vain Affrightment, and ridiculous to the Sinner, if it were never to be put in execution? There is an indissoluble connexion between His Hatred of Sin, and Punishment of the Offender, *Psal. 11. 5, 6. The wicked his Soul hates: Upon the wicked he shall ransure, fire, and brimstone, &c.* He cannot approve of it without denying himself, and a total Impunity would be a degree of Approbation.

The Displeasure of God is Eternal and Irreconcilable against Sin; for Sin being absolutely contrary to his holy Nature, He is Eternally contrary to it: If there be not therefore a way to separate the Sin from the Sinner, the Sinner must lie under the Displeasure of God; no displeasure can be manifested without some marks of it upon the Person that lies under that Displeasure. The Holiness of God will right it self of the wrongs done to it, and scatter the Prophaners of it at the greatest distance from him, which is the greatest Punishment that can be inflicted; to be removed far from the Fountain of Life is the worst of Deaths: God can as soon lay aside his Purity, as always forbear his Displeasure against an Impure Person; 'tis all one, not to hate it, and not to manifest his Hatred of it.

2. *As his Holiness is natural and necessary, so is the punishment of Unholiness necessary to him.* 'Tis necessary that he should abominate Sin, and therefore necessary he should discountenance it. The Severities of God against Sin are not vain Scare-crows, they have their foundation in the Righteousness of his Nature; 'tis because he is a Righteous and Holy God, that he *will not forgive our Transgressions and Sins, Josh. 24. 19.* that is, that he will punish them. The Throne of his Holiness is a fiery flame, *Dan. 7. 9.* there is both a pure light and a scorching heat. Whatsoever is contrary to the Nature of God, will fall under the Justice of God; he would else violate his own Nature, deny his own Perfection, seem to be out of love with his own Glory and Life. He doth not hate it out of choice, but from the Immutable propension of his Nature; 'tis not so free an act of his Will, as the Creation of Man and Angels, which he might have forborn as well as effected. As the detestation of Sin results from the universal rectitude of his Nature, so the punishment of Sin follows upon that, as he is the Righteous Governour of the World: 'Tis as much against his Nature not to punish it, as it is against his Nature not to loath it; He would cease to be Holy if he ceas'd to hate it, and he would cease to hate it if he ceas'd to punish it. Neither the Obedience of our *Servants* Life, nor the strength of his Cries, could put a bar to the Cup of his Passion: God so hated Sin, that when it was but imputed to his Son, without any commission of it, he would bring a Hell upon his Soul. Certainly if God could have hated Sin without punishing it, his Son had never felt the smart of his Wrath: His love to his Son had been strong enough to have caused him to forbear, had not the Holiness of his Nature been stronger to move him to inflict a Punishment according to the demerit of the Sin. God cannot but be Holy, and therefore cannot but be Just, because Injustice is a part of Unholiness.

3. *Therefore there can be no Communion between God and Unholy spirits.* How is it conceivable, that God should hate the Sin, and cherish the Sinner with all his filth in his bosom; that he should Eternally detest the Crime, and Eternally fold the Sinner in his Arms? Can less be expected from the Purity of his Nature, than to separate an impure Soul, as long as it remains so? Can there be any delightful Communion between those whose Natures are contrary? *Darkness* and *Light* may as soon kiss each other, and become one Nature; *God* and the *Devil* may as soon enter into an Eternal League and Covenant together: For God to  
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have pleasure in wickedness, and to admit *Evil to dwell with him*, are things equally impossible to his Nature<sup>\*</sup>; while he hates Impurity, he cannot have Communion with an impure Person. It may as soon be expected, that God should hate himself, offer Violence to his own Nature, lay aside his Purity as an Abominable thing, and blot his own Glory, as love an Impure Person, entertain him as his delight, and set him in the same Heaven and Happiness with himself, and his holy Angels: He must needs loath him, he must needs banish him from his Presence, which is the greatest Punishment. Gods *Holiness* and Hatred of Sin, necessarily infer the Punishment of it.

5. Information. *There is therefore a necessity of the satisfaction of the Holiness of God by some sufficient Mediator.* The Divine Purity could not meet with any acquiescence in all Mankind after the Fall: Sin was hated, the Sinner would be ruin'd, unless some way were found out to repair the Wrongs done to the *Holiness of God*; either the Sinner must be condemned for ever, or some Satisfaction must be made, that the *Holiness of the Divine Nature* might Eternally appear in its full lustre. That it is Essential to the Nature of God to hate all Unrighteousness, as that which is absolutely repugnant to his Nature, none do question. That the Justice of God is so Essential to him, as that Sin could not be pardon'd without Satisfaction, some do question; though this latter seems rationally to follow upon the former<sup>†</sup>. That *Holiness* is Essential to the Nature of God is evident, because else God may as much be conceived without Purity, as he might be conceived without the creating the *Sun* or *Stars*. No Man can in his right Wits frame a right Notion of a Deity, without *Purity*. It would be a less Blasphemy, against the Excellency of God, to conceit him not Knowing, than to imagine him not Holy: And for the Essentialness of his Justice, *Josua* joyns both his *Holiness* and his *Jealousie* as going hand in hand together, *Josb. 24. 19. He is a Holy God, he is a Jealous God, he will not forgive your sin.*

But consider only the Purity of God, since it is contrary to Sin, and consequently hating the Sinner; the guilty Person cannot be reduc'd to God, nor can the *Holiness of God* have any complacency in a filthy Person, but as Fire hath in Stubble, to consume it. How the Holy God should be brought to delight in Man without a *Salvo* for the Rights of his *Holiness*, is not to be conceiv'd without an impeachment of the Nature of God. The Law could not be abolish'd; that would reflect indeed upon the Righteousness of the Law-giver; to abolish it because of Sin, would imply a change of the Rectitude of his Nature: Must he change his *Holiness* for the sake of that which was against his *Holiness*, in a compliance with a prophane and unrighteous Creature? This should engage him rather to maintain his Law, than to null it. And to abrogate his Law as soon as he had enacted it, since Sin slept into the World presently after it, would be no credit to his Wisdom.

There must be a reparation made of the Honour of Gods *Holiness*; by our selves it could not be without Condemnation; by another it could not be without a sufficiency in the Person: No Creature could do it. All the Creatures being of a finite Nature, could not make a compensation for the disparagements of Infinite *Holiness*. He must have despicable and vile Thoughts of this Excellent Perfection, that imagines that a few Tears, and the glaving Fawnings at the death of a Creature, can be sufficient to repair the Wrongs, and restore the Rights of this Attribute. It must therefore be such a compensation as might be commensurate to the Holiness of the Divine Nature and the Divine Law, which could not be wrought by any, but him that was possessed of a Godhead, to give efficacy and exact congruity to it. The Person design'd and appointed by God for so great an affair, was *one in the form of God, one equal with God, Phil. 2. 6.* who could not be term'd by such a Title of Dignity, if he had not been equal to God in the universal rectitude of the Divine Nature, and therefore in his Holiness. The Punishment due to Sin is translated to that Person for the righting Divine *Holiness*, and the Righteousness of that Person is communicated to the Sinner for the Pardon of the Offending Creature.



If the Sinner had been Eternally damn'd, Gods hatred of Sin had been evidenc'd by the strokes of his Justice; but his Mercy to a Sinner had lain in obscurity. If the Sinner had been Pardoned and Saved without such a reparation, Mercy had been evident; but his *Holiness* had hid its head for ever in his own bosom. There was therefore a necessity of such a way to manifest his Purity, and yet to bring forth his Mercy: That *Mercy* might not alway sigh for the destruction of the Creature, and that *Holiness* might not mourn for the neglect of its Honour.

6. Information. Hence it will follow, *There is no justification of a Sinner by anything in himself.* After Sin had set foot in the World, Man could present nothing to God acceptable to him, or bearing any proportion to the Holiness of his Law, till God set forth a Person, upon whose account the Acceptation of our Persons and Services is founded, *Ephes. 1.6. Who hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* The Infinite Purity of God is so glorious, that it shames the Holiness of Angels, as the light of the *Sun* dims the light of the *Fire*: Much more will the Righteousness of Fallen Man, who is Vile, and *drinks up Iniquity like water*, vanish into Nothing in his Presence. With what Self-abasement and Abhorrence ought he to be possessed that comes as short of the Angels in Purity, as a *Dung-hill* doth of a *Star*? The highest Obedience that ever was perform'd by any meer Man, since Lapsed Nature, cannot challenge any acceptance with God, or stand before so exact an Inquisition. What Person hath such a clear Innocence, and unspotted Obedience in such a Perfection, as in any degree to sute the Holiness of the Divine Nature? *Psal. 143. 2. Enter not into judgment with thy Servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.* If God should debate the case simply with Man in his own Person, without respecting the Mediator, he were not able to *answer one of a thousand.* Though we are his Servants, as *David* was, and perform a sincere Service, yet there are many little Motes and Dust of Sin in the best Works, that cannot lie undiscover'd from the Eye of his Holiness: And if we come short in the least of what the Law requires, we are guilty of all\*. So that *in thy sight shall no man living be justified*: In the sight of thy Infinite Holiness, which hates the least spot; in the sight of thy Infinite Justice, which punishes the least Transgression.

God would descend below his own Nature, and vilifie both his Knowledge and Purity, should he accept that for a Righteousness and Holiness which is not so in it self; and nothing is so, which hath the least stain upon it contrary to the Nature of God. The most holy Saints in Scripture, upon a prospect of his Purity, have cast away all confidence in themselves; every flash of the Divine Purity has struck them into a deep sense of their own Impurity and shame for it, *Job 42. 6. Wherefore I abhor my self in dust and ashes.* What can the language of any Man be that lies under a sense of Infinite Holiness and his own Defilement in the least, but that of the Prophet, *Isai. 6. 5. Wo is me, I am undone?* And what is there in the World can administer any other thought than this, unless God be considered in Christ, *reconciling the World to himself?* As a Holy God, so righted, as that he can dispense with the Condemnation of a Sinner, without dispensing with his Hatred of Sin; pardoning the Sin in the Criminal, because it hath been punished in the Surety. That Righteousness which God hath set forth for Justification, is not our own, but a *Righteousness which is of God*, *Phil. 3. 9. 10.* of Gods appointing, and of Gods performing; appointed by the *Father*, who is God, and performed by the *Son*, who is one with the Father. A Righteousness surmounting that of all the glorious Angels, since it is an Immutable one which can never fail, an *Everlasting Righteousness*, *Dan. 9. 24.* A Righteousness wherein the Holiness of God can acquiesce, as considered in it self, because it is a Righteousness of one equal with God. As we therefore dishonour the Divine Majesty, when we insist upon our own blemish'd Righteousness for our Justification; (as if a *Mortal Man were as just as God*, and a *Man as pure as his Maker*, *Job 4. 17.*) So we highly honour the Purity of his Nature, when we charge our Selves with Folly, acknowledge our selves Unclean, and accept of that Righteousness which gives



gives a full content to his Infinite Purity. There can be no Justification of a Sinner by anything in himself.

7. It informs us, 1. *Holiness* be a glorious Perfection of the Divine Nature, when the *Divinity of Christ* might be argued from hence. He is indeed dignified with the Title of the *Holy One*, Acts 3.14, 16. a Title often given to God in the Old Testament; and he is called the *Holy of Holies*, Dan. 9.24. but because the Angels seemed to be termed *holy Ones*, Dan. 4.13, 17. and the most Sacred place in the *Temple* was also called the *Holy of Holies*, I shall not insist upon that. But you find our *Saviour* particularly applauded by the Angels, as *Holy*; when this Perfection of the Divine Nature, together with the Incommunicable Name of God, are link'd together, and ascrib'd to him. *Isai. 6.3. Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, and the whole Earth is full of his glory*, which the *Apostle* interprets of *Christ*, *John 12.39, 41. Isaiah* again, *He hath blinded their Eyes, and hardened their Hearts, that they should not see with their Eyes, nor understand with their Hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.* He that *Isaiah* saw environ'd with the *Seraphims* in a Reverential posture before his face, and praised as most Holy by them, was the True and Eternal God; such Acclamations belong to none, but the great *Jehovah*, God blest for ever: But, saith *John*, It was the glory of *Christ* that *Isaiah* saw in this Vision; *Christ* therefore is God blest for ever, of whom it was said, *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts* \*. The *Evangelist* had been speaking of *Christ*, the Miracles which he wrought, the obstinacy of the *Jews* against believing on him; *his Glory* therefore is to be referred to the Subject he had been speaking of. The *Evangelist* was not speaking of the *Father*, but of the *Son*, and cites those words out of *Isaiah*; not to teach any thing of the *Father*, but to shew that the *Jews* could not believe in *Christ*. He speaks of Him that had wrought so many Miracles; but *Christ* wrought those Miracles: He speaks of him whom the *Jews* refused to believe on; but *Christ* was the Person they would not believe on, while they acknowledged God. It was the *Glory* of this Person *Isaiah* saw, and this Person *Isaiah* spake of, if the Words of the *Evangelist* be of any credit. The *Angels* are too holy to give Acclamations belonging to God, to any but Him that is God.

\* *Placeus, de  
Dicitur, Christum  
in locum.*

8. It informs us, that *God is fully fit for the Government of the World*. The Righteousness of *Gods Nature* qualifies Him to be Judge of the World: If he were not perfectly Righteous and Holy, he were incapable to govern and Judge the World; *Rom. 3.5. If there be unrighteousness with God, how shall he judge the World? God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment*, *Job 34.12.* How despicable is a Judge that wants Innocence? As Omniscience fits God to be a Judge, so *Holiness* fits him to be a Righteous Judge; *Psal. 1.6. The Lord knows, that is, loves the way of the Righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

9. Information. If *Holiness* be an eminent Perfection of the Divine Nature, The *Christian Religion* is of a *Divine Extraction*. It discovers the *Holiness* of God, and forms the Creature to a conformity to him. It gives us a prospect of his Nature, represents him in the *Beauty of Holiness*, *Psal. 110.3.* more than the whole *Glass* of the Creation. 'Tis in this *Evangelical Glass* the *Glory of the Lord* is beheld, and rendred amiable and imitable †. 'Tis a Doctrine according to *Godliness*, *1 Tim. 6.3.* directing us to live the Life of God; a life worthy of God, and worthy of our first Creation by his hand. It takes us off from our selves, fixeth us upon a Noble End, points our Actions and the scope of our lives to God. It quells the Monsters of Sin, discountenanceth the Motes of Wickedness; and it is no mean Argument for the *Divinity* of it, that it sets us no lower a Pattern for our Imitation, than the *Holiness* of the Divine Majesty. God is exalted upon the Throne of his *Holiness* in it, and the Creature advanc'd to an Image and resemblance of it, *1 Pet. 1.16. Be ye holy, for I am holy.*

† *2 Cor. 3.18.*

*Use. 2.* The Second use is for *Comfort*. This Attribute frowns upon Lapsed Nature, but smiles in the Restorations made by the Gospel. *Gods Holiness*, in conjunction with his *Justice*, is Terrible to a guilty Sinner; but now, in conjunction with



with his *Mercy*, by the Satisfaction of Christ, 'tis sweet to a Believing Penitent. In the *first Covenant*, the Purity of his Nature was joyned with the Rigours of his Justice: In the *second Covenant*, the Purity of his Nature is joyned with the Sweetness and Tenderness of his Mercy. In the one, *Justice* flames against the Sinner in the right of Injur'd Holiness: In the other, *Mercy* yearns towards a Believer, with the consent of Righted Holiness. To rejoyce in the *Holiness* of God, is the true and genuine Spirit of a Renewed Man: *My heart rejoiceth in the Lord*; what follows? *There is none holy as the Lord*, 1 Sam. 2. 2. Some Perfections of the Divine Nature are Astonishing, some Affrighting; but this may fill us both with Astonishment at it, and a Joy in it.

1. *By Covenant we have an Interest in this Attribute, as well as any other.* In that Clause of *Gods being our God*, entire God with all his Glory, all his Perfections are past over as a portion, and a gracious Soul is brought into Union with God, as his God: Not with a part of God, but with God in the Simplicity, Extent, Integrity of his Nature; and therefore in this Attribute. And upon some account it may seem more in this Attribute, than in any other; for if he be our God, he is our God in his Life and Glory, and therefore in his Purity especially, without which he could not live, he could not be happy and blessed. Little comfort will it be to have a dead God, or a vile God made over to us: And as by this Covenant he is our *Father*, so he gives us his Nature, and communicates his *Holiness* in all his Dispensations; and in those that are severest, as well as those that are sweetest; *Heb. 12. 10. But he corrects us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his Holiness.* Not simply, *partakers of Holiness*, but of *his Holiness*; to have a Portrayture of it in our Nature, a Meddal of it in our hearts, a spark of the same Nature with that Immense splendor and flame in himself. The Holiness of a Covenant Soul is a resemblance of the *Holiness* of God, and formed by it: As the Picture of the Sun in a Cloud is a fruit of his Beams, and an Image of its Author. The fulness of the Perfection of *Holiness* remains in the Nature of God, as the fulness of the Light doth in the Sun; yet there are transmissions of Light from the Sun to the Moon, and it is a Light of the same Nature both in the one and in the other. The Holiness of a Creature, is nothing else but a reflection of the Divine *Holiness* upon it; and to make the Creature capable of it, God takes various methods, according to his Covenant Grace.

2. *This Attribute renders God a fit Object for Trust and Dependance.* The Notion of an Unholy and Unrighteous God, is an uncomfortable *Idea* of him, and beats off our hands from laying any hold of him. 'Tis upon this Attribute the Reputation and Honour of God in the World is built: What encouragement can we have to believe him, or what Incentives could we have to serve him, without the lustre of this in his Nature? The very thought of an Unrighteous God, is enough to drive Men at the greatest distance from him: As the Honesty of a Man gives a reputation to his Word; so doth the Holiness of God give credit to his Promise. 'Tis by this he would have us stifle our Fears, and fortifie our Trust, *Isai. 41. 14. Fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel:* He will be in his Actions, what he is in his Nature. Nothing shall make him defile his own Excellency: Unrighteousness is the ground of Mutability; but the Promise of God doth never fail, because the rectitude of his Nature doth never languish: Were his Attributes without the conduct of this, they would be altogether formidable. As this is the glory of all his other Perfections; so this only renders him comfortable to a Believing Soul, Might we not fear his Power to crush us, his Mercy to overlook us, his Wisdom to design against us, if this did not influence them? What an oppression is Power without Righteousness in the hand of a Creature, destructive instead of protecting? The *Devil* is a mighty Spirit, but not fit to be trusted, because he is an Impure Spirit. When God would give us the highest Security of the sincerity of his Intentions, he *swears* by this Attribute †: *His Holiness* as well as his Truth is laid to pawn for the Security of his Promise. As we make God the Judge between us and others, when we swear by him; so he makes his Holiness the Judge between himself and his People, when he swears by it.

† *Psalm 83.*



1. *This renders him fit to be confided in for the answer of our Prayers.* This is the ground of his readiness to give. \* *If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts; how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask him!* Though the holiness of God be not mention'd, yet it is to be understood; the *Emphasis* lies in those words *if you being evil*: God is then considered in a disposition contrary to this, which can be nothing but his Righteousness.

If you that are unholy, and have so much Corruption in you, to render you cruel, can bestow upon your Children the good things they want, how much more shall God, who is holy, and hath nothing in him to check his mercifulness to his Creatures, grant the Petitions of his Suppliants? 'Twas this Attribute edg'd the fiduciary importunity of the Souls under the Altar for the revenging their blood unjustly shed upon the Earth; *Rev. 6. 10. How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the Earth?* Let not thy holiness stand with folded Arms as careless of the eminent Sufferings of those that fear thee, we implore thee by the holiness of thy Nature, and the truth of thy Word.

2. *This renders him fit to be confided in for the comfort of our Souls in a broken condition.* The reviving the hearts of the spiritually afflicted, is a part of the holiness of his Nature; *Isa. 57. 15. Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble.* He acknowledgeth himself the lofty One, they might therefore fear, he would not revive them; but he is also the holy One, and therefore he will refresh them; he is not more lofty than he is holy; besides the argument of the immutability of his Promise, and the might of his Power, here is the holiness of his Nature moving him to pity his drooping Creature: His Promise is usher'd in with the name of power, *high and lofty One*, to bar their distrust of his strength; and with a declaration of his holiness, to check any despair of his Will: There is no ground to think I should be false to my word, or misemploy my Power, since that cannot be, because of the holiness of my Name and Nature.

3. *This renders him fit to be confided in for the maintenance of grace, and protection of us against our spiritual Enemies.* What our Saviour thought an argument in Prayer, we may well take as a ground of our confidence. In the strength of this he puts up his sute, when in his mediatory Capacity he intercedes for the preservation of his People; *John 17. 11. Holy Father, keep through thy own Name those that thou hast given me that they may be one as we are.* Holy Father, not merciful Father, or powerful, or wise Father, but *holy*; and *Verse 25. righteous Father.* Christ pleads that Attribute for the performance of God's Word, which was laid to pawn when he past his word: For it was by his Holiness that he swore, *That his seed should endure for ever, and his Throne as the Sun before him* †; which is meant of the perpetuity of the Covenant which he made with Christ, and is also meant of the preservation of the *mystical Seed of David*, and the perpetuating his *loving kindness* to them †. Grace is an Image of God's holiness, and therefore the holiness of God is most proper to be used as an Argument to interest and engage him in the preservation of it. In the midst of Church provocations, he will not utterly extinguish, because he is the *holy One* in the midst of her \*: Nor in the midst of Judgments will he condemn his people to death, because he is *their holy one* †; but their Enemies shall be ordained for Judgment, and established for Correction. One Prophet assures them in the Name of the Lord, upon the strength of this Perfection; and the other upon the same ground is confident of the protection of the Church, because of Gods holiness engag'd in an inviolable Covenant.

3. *Comfort.* Since holiness is a glorious Perfection of the Nature of God, he will certainly value every holy Soul. 'Tis of a greater value with him than the Souls of all men in the World, that are destitute of it: *Wicked men are the worst of wretchednesses*, meer dross and dunghill †. Purity then, which is contrary to wickedness, must be the most precious thing in his esteem; he must needs love that quality which he is most pleas'd with in himself, as a father looks with most delight upon the child which is possess'd with those dispositions he most values in his own nature. *His Countenance doth behold the upright*, *Pl. 11. 7.* He looks upon them with a full and open Face of



\* Psal. 73. 20.

† 2 Pet. 1. 4.

favour, with a countenance clear, unmaskt and smiling, with a Face full of delight: Heaven it self is not such a pleasing Object to him, as the Image of his own increased holiness in the created holiness of Men and Angels: As a man esteems that most, which is most like him, of his own Generation, more than a piece of Art, which is meerly the product of his wit or strength. And he must love holiness in the Creature, he would not else love his own Image, and consequently would undervalue himself: He despiseth the *Image* the wicked bears \*, but he cannot disesteem his own stamp on the godly; he cannot but delight in his own work, his choice work, the Master-piece of all his works, the new Creation of things; that which is next to himself, as being a *Divine Nature* like himself †: When he overlooks strength, parts, knowledge, he cannot overlook this; He *sets apart him that is godly for himself*, 1 *Sal.* 4. 3. as a peculiar Object to take pleasure in, he reserves such for his own complacency, when he leaves the rest of the World to the Devils power; he is choice of them above all his other works, and will not let any have so great a propriety in them as himself. If it be so dear to him here in its imperfect and mixt condition, that he appropriates it as a peculiar Object for his own delight; how much more will the unspotted purity of glorified Saints be infinitely pleasing to him? So that he will take less pleasure in the material Heavens than in such a Soul. Sin only is detestable to God, and when this is done away, the Soul becomes as lovely in his account, as before it was loathsome.

4. 'Tis comfort, upon this account, That *God will perfect holiness in every upright Soul*. We many times distrust God, and despond in our selves, because of the infinite holiness of the Divine Nature, and the dunghil Corruptions in our own; but the holiness of God engageth him to the preservation of it, and consequently to the perfection of it; as appears by our Saviour's Argument, *Job.* 17. 11. *Holy Father, keep through thy own name, those whom thou hast given me; to what end? that they may be one as we are*; one with us, in the resemblances of Purity. And the holiness of the Soul is used as an Argument by the *Psalmist*. *Psal.* 86. 2. *Preserve my soul, for I am holy*; that is, I have an ardent desire to holiness: Thou hast separated me from the mass of the corrupted World, preserve & perfect me with the Assembly of the glorified Quire. The more holy any are, the more communicative they are; God being most holy, is most communicative of that which he most esteems in himself, and delights to see in his Creature: He is therefore more ready to impart his holiness to them, that beg for it, than to communicate his knowledge or his power. Though he were holy, yet he let *Adam* fall, who never petition'd his Holiness to preserve him; he let him fall, to declare the Holiness of his own Nature, which had wanted its due manifestation without it: But since that cannot be declar'd in a higher manner than it hath been already in the death of the Surety, that bore our Guilt, there is no fear he should cast the work out of his hands, since the design of the permission of man's Apostacy, in the discovery of the perfections of his Nature, has been fully answered. The *finishing the good work, he hath begun*, hath a relation to the glory of Christ; and his own glory in Christ to be manifested in the *day* of his Appearing \*, wherein the glory, both of his own holiness, and the holiness of the Mediator, are to receive their full manifestation. As it is a part of the holiness of Christ to *sanctifie his Church* †, till not a *wrinkle or spot* be left; so it is the part of God not to leave that work imperfect, which his holiness hath attempted a second time to beautifie his Creature with. He will not cease exalting this Attribute, which is the Believers by the new Covenant, till he utters that applauding Speech of his own work, *Cant.* 4. 7. *Thou art all fair, my Love, there is no spot in thee*.

\* Phil. 1. 6.

† Eph. 5. 26, 27.

Use. 3. Is for *Exhortation*. Is holiness an eminent perfection of the Divine Nature, then

1. *Let us get and preserve right and strong apprehensions of this Divine Perfection*. Without a due sense of it, we can never exalt God in our hearts; and the more distinct Conceptions we have of this, and the rest of his Attributes, the more we glorifie him. When *Moses* considered God as *his strength and salvation*, he would exalt him ||, and he could never break out in so admirable a *Doxology* as that in the *Text*, without a deep sense of the glory of his Purity, which he speaks of with so much admiration. Such a sense will be of use to us.

|| Exod. 15. 2.

1. In *promoting genuine Convictions*. A deep consideration of the holiness of



of God cannot but be followed with a deep consideration of our impure and miserable Condition by reason of sin: We cannot glance upon it without reflections upon our own Vileness. *Adam* no sooner heard the Voice of a holy God in the Garden, but he considered his *own nakedness* with shame and fear\*: Much less can we fix our Minds upon it, but we must be touched with a sense of our own uncleanness. The clear beams of the Sun discover that filthiness in our Garments and Members, which was not visible in the darkness of the night. Impure Metals are discern'd by comparing them with that which is pure and perfect in its kind. The sense of guilt is the first natural Result upon a sense of this excellent Perfection; and the sense of the Imperfection of our own Righteousness is the next. Who can think of it, and reflect upon himself as an Object fit for Divine Love? Who can have a due thought of it without regarding himself as stubble before a consuming Fire? Who can without a confusion of heart and face, glance upon that pure Eye which beholds with detestation, the foul Motes as well as the filthier and bigger Spots? When *Isaiah* saw his glory, and heard how highly the Angels exalted God for this Perfection, he was in a cold sweat, ready to swoon, till a *Seraphim*, with a *Coal from the Altar*, both purg'd and reviv'd him†. They are sound and genuine Convictions, which have the prospect of Divine Purity for their immediate Spring, and not a foresight of our own Misery; when it is not the punishment we have deserved, but the holiness we have offended, most grates our hearts. Such Convictions are the first rude Draughts of the Divine Image in our Spirits; and grateful to God, because they are an acknowledgment of the glory of this Attribute, and the first mark of honour given to it by the Creature: Those that never had a sense of their own Vileness, were alway destitute of a sense of God's holiness. And by the way we may observe, That those that scoff at any for hanging down the head under the Consideration and Conviction of Sin, (as is too usual with the World) scoff at them for having deeper Apprehensions of the Purity of God than themselves, and consequently make a mock of the holiness of God, which is the ground of those Convictions; a sense of this would prevent such a damnable reproaching.

2. A sense of this will render us humble in the possession of the greatest holiness a Creature were capable of. We are apt to be proud with the *Pharisee*, when we look upon others wallowing in the Mire of base and unnatural Lusts; but let any clap their Wings, if they can, in a vain boasting and exaltation, when they view the holiness of God. What Torch, if it had reason, would be proud and swagger in its own light, if it compar'd it self with the Sun? *Who can stand before this holy Lord God*, is the just reflection of the holiest Person, as it was of those *1 Sam. 6. 20.* that had felt the marks of his jealousy after their looking into the Ark, though likely out of affection to it, and triumphant joy at its return. When did the Angels testify, by the covering of their Faces, their weakness to bear the lustre of his Majesty, but when they beheld his glory? When did they signify by their *covering their feet* the shame of their own Vileness, but when their hearts were fullest of the applaudings of this Perfection‡? Though they found themselves without spot yet not with such a holiness, that they could appear either with their faces or feet unvail'd and unmask'd in the Presence of God. Dost the immense splendor of this Attribute, engender shaming reflections in those pure Spirits? What will it, should it do in us, that dwell in Houses of Clay, and creep up and down with that Clay upon our backs, and too much of it in our hearts? The Stars themselves which appear beautiful in the night, are mask'd at the awaking of the Sun: What a dim light is that of a Glowworm to that of the Sun? The apprehensions of this made the Elders humble themselves in the midst of their glory, by *casting down their Crowns before his Throne*\*; a Metaphor taken from the triumphing Generals among the *Romans*, who hung up their victorious *Laurels* in the *Capitol*, dedicating them to their Gods, acknowledging them their Superiors in strength, and Authors of their victory. This self-emptiness at the consideration of Divine Purity, is the note of the true Church represented by the *24 Elders*, and a note of a true Member of the Church; whereas boasting of Perfection & Merit is the property of the *Antichristian* tribe, that have mean thoughts of this adorable Perfection, & think themselves more righteous than the unspotted Angels, What a self annihilation is therein a good man,



when the sense of Divine Purity is most lively in him; yea, how detestable is he to himself? There is as little proportion between the holiness of the Divine Majesty, and that of the most righteous Creature, as there is between a nearness of a Person that stands upon a Mountain to the Sun, and of him that beholds him in a Vale; one is nearer than the other, but it is an advantage not to be boasted of, in regard of the vast distance that is between the Sun and the elevated Spectator.

3. This would make us full of an affectionate Reverence in all our approaches to God. By this Perfection God is rendred venerable, and fit to be reverenc'd by his Creature; and magnificent thoughts of it in the Creature would awaken him to an actual reverence of the Divine Majesty. *Psal. 111. 9. Holy and reverend is his name*; a good opinion of this would engender in us a sincere respect towards him; we should then *serve the Lord with fear*, as the Expression is *Psal. 2. 11.* that is, be afraid to cast any thing before him that may offend the eyes of his Purity. Who would venture rashly and garishly into the presence of an eminent Moralist, or of a righteous King upon his Throne? The fixedness of the Angels arose from the continual prospect of this. What if we had been with *Isaiah* when he saw the Vision, and beheld him in the same glory, and the heavenly Quire in their reverential Posture in the Service of God; would it not have barred our wanderings, and stak'd us down to our Duty? Would not the fortifying an Idea of it in our Minds produce the same effect? 'Tis for want of this we carry our selves so loosely and unbecomingly in the Divine Presence, with the same, or meaner Affections than those wherewith we stand before some vile Creature, that is our Superiour in the World; as though a piece of filthy Flesh were more valuable than this Perfection of the Divinity. How doth the *Psalmist* double his Exhortation to men to sing Praise to God, *Psal. 47. 6. Sing praise to God, sing praises; sing praise to our King, sing praise*; because of his Majesty, and the Purity of his Dominion: And *verse 8. God reigns over the Heathen, God sits upon the Throne of his Holiness*. How would this elevate us in Praise, and prostrate us in Prayer, when we praise and pray with an understanding and insight of that Nature we bless or implore; as he speaks *verse 7. Sing ye praise with understanding*. The holiness of God in his Government and Dominion, the holiness of his Nature, and the holiness of his Precepts, should beget in us an humble respect in our Approaches. The more we grow in a sense of this, the more shall we advance in the true performance of all our Duties. \* Those Nations which ador'd the Sun, had they at first seen his Brightness wrapped and maskt in a Cloud, and paid a veneration to it, how would their Adorations have mounted to a greater point, after they had seen it in its full brightness, shaking off these Vails, and chasing away the Mists before it; what a profound reverence would they have paid it, when they beheld it in its Glory and Meridian Brightness? Our reverence to God in all our Addresses to him will arrive to greater degrees, if every act of Duty be usher'd in, and season'd with the thoughts of God as sitting upon a Throne of Holiness; we shall have a more becoming sense of our own Vileness, a greater ardor to his Service, a deeper respect in his Presence, if our Understanding be more clear'd, and possessed with Notions of this Perfection. Thus take a view of God in this part of his Glory, before you fall down before his Throne, and assure your selves you will find your hearts and services quickned with a new and lively Spirit.

4. A due sense of this Perfection in God would produce in us a fear of God, and arm us against Temptations and Sin. What made the Heathens so wanton and loose, but the representations of their Gods as vitious? Who would stick at Adulteries and more prodigious Lusts, that can take a Pattern for them from the Person he adores for a Deity? Upon which account *Plato* would have *Poets* banish'd from his Commonwealth, because by dressing up their Gods in wanton garbs in their Poems, they encourag'd wickedness in the People. But if the thoughts of Gods holiness were impress'd upon us, we should regard sin with the same eye, mark it with the same detestation in our measures, as God himself doth. So far as we are sensible of the Divine Purity, we should account sin vile as it deserves; we should hate it intirely, without a grain of love to it, and hate it perpetually.

*Psal.*

\* Amyrald.  
Moral. Tom. 5.  
p. 462.



*Psal. 119. 104. Through thy Precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every filthy way.* He looks into God's Statute-Book, and thereby arrives to an understanding of the Purity of his Nature, whence his hatred of Iniquity commenc'd. This would govern our Motion, check our Vices; it would make us tremble at the hissing of a Temptation: When a Corruption did but peep out, and put forth its head, a look to the Divine Purity would be attended with a fresh Supply of Strength to resist it. There is such Fortification, as to be wrapped up in the sense of this: This would fill us with an awe of God; we should be ashamed to admit any filthy thing into us, which we know is detestable to his pure Eye. As the approach of a grave and serious Man makes Children hasten their Trifles out of the way; so would a Consideration of this Attribute make us cast away our *Idols*, and sling away our ridiculous thoughts and designs.

5. A due sense of this Perfection, *would inflame us with a vehement desire to be conform'd to him.* All our Desires would be ardent to regulate our selves according to this Pattern of Holiness and Goodness, which is not to be equalled; the Contemplating it as it shines forth in the Face of Christ, *will transform us into the same Image* †. Since our lapsed state, we cannot behold the holiness of God in it self without affrightment; nor is it an Object of Imitation, but as tempered in Christ to our view. When we cannot without blinding our selves, look upon the Sun in its Brightness, we may behold it through a colour'd Glass, whereby the lustre of it is moderated, without dazzling our eyes. The sense of it will furnish us with a greatness of mind, that little things will be contemned by us; Motives of a greater alloy would have little influence upon us; we should have the highest Motives to every Duty, and Motives of the same strain which influence the Angels above. It would change us, not only into an Angelical Nature, but a Divine Nature: We should act like men of another Sphere; as if we had received our Original in another World, and seen with Angels the ravishing Beauties of Heaven. How little would the mean Employments of the World sink us into dirt and mud? How often hath the Meditation of the Courage of a Valiant Man, or Acuteness and Industry of a Learned Person, spur'd on some men to an imitation of them, and transform'd them into the same Nature? As the looking upon the Sun imprints an Image of the Sun upon our eye, that we seem to behold nothing but the Sun a while after. The view of the Divine Purity would fill us with a holy generosity to imitate him, more than the Examples of the best men upon Earth. It was a saying of a *Heathen*, *That if Vertue were visible, it would kindle a noble flame of Love to it in the heart, by its ravishing beauty.* Shall the Infinite Purity of the Author of all Vertue come short of the strength of a Creature? Can we not render that visible to us by frequent Meditation, which though it be invisible in his Nature, is made visible in his Law, in his Ways, in his Son? It would make us ready to obey him, since we know he cannot Command any thing that is sinful, but what is holy, just, and good: It would put all our Affections in their due place, elevate them above the Creature, and subject them to the Creator.

6. It would make us patient and contented under all God's Dispensations. All penal Evils are the Fruits of his Holiness, as he is Judge and Governour of the World: He is not an Arbitrary Judge, nor doth any Sentence pronounc'd, nor Warrant for Execution issue from him, but what bears upon it a Stamp of the Righteousness of his Nature; he doth nothing by Passion or Unrighteousness, but according to the Eternal Law of his own unstained Nature, which is the Rule to him in his Works, the Basis and Foundation of his Throne and Sovereign Dominion. *Psal. 89. 14. Justice, or Righteousness, and Judgment are the Habitation of thy Throne*; upon these his Sovereign Power is established: So that there can be no just Complaint or Indictment brought against any of his Proceedings with men. How doth our Saviour, who had the highest Apprehensions of God's Holiness, justify God in his deepest Distresses, when he cried and was not answered in the particular he desired, in that Prophetick Psalm of him, *Psal. 22. 2, 3. I cry day and night, but thou hearest not. Thou seemest to be deaf to all my Petitions, as far off from the words of my roaring; but thou art holy, I cast no blame upon*



\* Heb. 12.15.

upon thee: All thy dealings are squar'd by thy holiness, this is the only Law to thee; in this I acquiesce. 'Tis part of thy holiness to hide thy face from me, to shew thereby thy detestation of sin. Our Saviour adores the Divine Purity in his sharpest Agony, and a like sense of it would guide us in the same steps to acknowledge and glorify it, in our greatest desertions and afflictions; especially since as they are the fruit of the holiness of his Nature, so they are the means to impart to us clearer stamps of *holiness*, according to that in himself, which is the original Copy\*. He melts us down as Gold, to fit us for the receiving a new Impression, to mortify the Affections of the Flesh, and clothe us with the Graces of his Spirit. The due sense of this would make us to submit to his stroke, and to wait upon him for a good issue of his dealings.

† Rev. 4.8.

2. *Exhortation.* Is holiness a Perfection of the Divine Nature? Is it the glory of the Deity? Then *let us glorify this holiness of God.* Moses glorifies it in the *Text*, and glorifies it in a *Song*, which was a Copy for all Ages. The whole Corporation of *Seraphims* have their Mouths fill'd with the praises of it. The Saints, whither Militant on Earth, or Triumphant in Heaven, are to continue the same Acclamation, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts*†. Neither Angels nor glorified Spirits exalt at the same rate, the *Power* which formed them *Creatures*, nor *Goodness* which preserves them in a blessed Immortality; As they do *holiness*, which they bear some beams of in their own Nature, and whereby they are capacitated to stand before his Throne. Upon the account of this, a Debt of Praise is demanded of all Rational Creatures by the *Psalmist*, *Psal. 99. 3. Let them praise thy great and terrible Name, for it is holy.* Not so much for the greatness of his Majesty, or the treasures of his Justice; but as they are considered in conjunction with his holiness, which renders them beautiful; *for it is holy.* Grandeur and Majesty simply in themselves, are not Objects of Praise, nor do they merit the Acclamations of men, when destitute of Righteousness: This only renders every thing else adorable; and this adorns the Divine Greatness with an amiableness: *Isa. 12. 6. Great is the holy One of Israel in the midst of thee;* and makes his Might worthy of Praise, *Luke 1. 49.* In honouring this, which is the soul and spirit of all the rest, we give a glory to all the Perfections which constitute and beautify his Nature: And without the glorifying this, we glorify nothing of them, though we should extoll every other single Attribute a thousand times. He values no other Adoration of his Creatures, unless this be interested, nor accepts any thing as a glory from them; *Levit. 10. 3. I will be sanctified in them that come near me, and I will be glorified.* As if he had said, in manifesting my Name to be holy, you truly, you only honour me. And as the *Scripture* seldom speaks of this Perfection without a particular *Emphasis*, it teaches us not to think of it without a special Elevation of heart: By this act only, while we are on Earth, can we joyn consort with the Angels in Heaven; he that doth not honour it, delight in it, and in the meditation of it, hath no resemblance of it; he hath none of the Image, that delights not in the Original. Every thing of God is glorious, but this most of all. If he built the World principally for any thing, it was for the communication of his Goodness, and display of his Holiness. He formed the Rational Creature to manifest his Holiness in that Law whereby he was to be governed: Then deprive not God of the design of his own Glory.

We honour this Attribute,

1. *When we make it the ground of our love to God.* Not because he is gracious to us, but holy in himself. As God honours it, in loving himself for it, we should honour it, by pitching our Affections upon him chiefly for it. What renders God amiable to himself, should render him lovely to all his Creatures. *Isa. 42. 21. The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake.* If the hatred of evil be the immediate result of a love to God, then the peculiar object or term of our love to God, must be that Perfection which stands in direct opposition to the hatred of evil. *Psal. 97. 10. To that love the Lord, hate evil.* When we honour his holiness in every stamp and impression of it; his Law, not principally because of its usefulness to us, its accommodateness to the order of the World, but for its innate Purity, and his



his People not for our interest in them, so much as for bearing upon them this glittering mark of the Deity, we honour then the Purity of the Law-giver, and the Excellency of the Sanctifier.

2. We honour it, *when we regard chiefly the illustrious appearance of this in his Judgments in the World.* In a case of Temporal Judgment, *Moses* celebrates it in the *Text*: In a case of Spiritual Judgments, the Angels applaud it in *Isaiah*. All his Severe proceedings are nothing but the strong breathings of this Attribute. Purity is the flash of his revenging sword. If he did not hate evil, his Vengeance would not reach the Committers of it: He is a *Refiners fire* in the day of his Anger\*: By his separating Judgments, he *takes away the wicked of the earth like Dross*, *Psal. 119. 119.* How is his holiness honoured, when we take notice of his sweeping out the rubbish of the World: How he sutes punishment to sin, and discovers his hatred of the matter and circumstances of the Evil, in the matter and circumstances of the Judgment. This Perfection is legible in every stroke of his Sword; we honour it when we read the syllables of it, and not by standing amaz'd only at the greatness and severity of the Blow, when we read how holy he is in his most terrible Dispensations: For as in them God magnifies the greatness of his Power, so he sanctifies himself; that is, declares the Purity of his Nature as a Revenger of all Impiety. *Ezek. 38. 22, 23. And I will plead against him with Pestilence, and with Blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the people that are with him, an overflowing Rain and great Hail-stones, Fire and Brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself.*

3. We honour this Attribute, *when we take notice of it in every accomplishment of his Promise, and every grant of a Mercy.* His Truth is but a branch of his Righteousness, a slip from this Root. He is glorious in Holiness in the account of *Moses*, because he *led forth his People whom he had redeemed*, *Exod. 15. 13.* His People by a Covenant with their Fathers, being the God of *Moses*, the God of *Israel*, and the God of their Fathers: Verse 2. *My God, and my Fathers God, I will exalt thee.* For what? for his faithfulness to his Promise. The holiness of God, which *Mary*, *Luke 1. 49.* magnifies, is summ'd up in this, the help he afforded his Servant *Israel* in the remembrance of his mercy, as he spake to our Fathers, to *Abraham* and his Seed for ever, Verse 54, 55. The certainty of his Covenant Mercy depends upon an unchangeableness of his holiness. What are *\* sure mercies*, are *holy mercies* in the *Septuagint*; and in *Acts 13. 34.* which makes *\* that Trinitation Canonical.* His nearness to answer us when we call upon him for such Mercies, is a fruit of the holiness of his Name and Nature. *Psal. 145. 17. The Lord is holy in all his works; the Lord is high to all them that call upon him.* *Hannah*, after a return of Prayer, sets a particular mark upon this in her Song, *1 Sam. 2. 2. There is none holy as the Lord;* separated from all Dross, firm to his Covenant, and righteous in it to his Suppliants that confide in him, and plead his Word. When we observe the workings of this in every return of Prayer, we honour it; 'tis a sign the Mercy is really a return of Prayer, and not a Mercy of course, bearing upon it only the Characters of a common Providence. This was the Perfection *David* would bless for the Catalogue of Mercies in *Psal. 103. 1. &c. Bless his (holy) Name.* Certainly one reason why sincere Prayer is so delightful to him, is because it puts him upon the exercise of this his beloved Perfection, which he so much delights to honour. Since God acts in all those as the Governour of the World, we honour him not, unless we take notice of that Righteousness which fits him for a Governour, and is the inward Spring of all his Motions. *Gen. 18. 25. Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* It was his design in his pity to *Israel*, as well as the Calamities he intended against the *Heathens*, to be *sanctified in them*; that is, declared holy in his Merciful, as well as his Judicial procedure †. Hereby † *Ez. 36. 21, 23.* God credits his Righteousness, which seemed to be forgotten by the one, and contemned by the other ‖, he removes by this all suspicion of any unfaithfulness ‖ *Sanctified in him.*



4. We honour this Attribute, *when we trust his Covenant, and Promise against outward Appearances*. Thus our Saviour in the *Prophecy* of him\*; when God seemed to bar up the Gates of his Palace against the entry of any more Petitions, This Attribute proves the support of the Redeemers Soul; *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the Praises of Israel*: As it refers to what goes before, it has been twice explain'd; as it refers to what follows, it is a ground of trust, *Thou inhabitest the Praises of Israel*: Thou hast had the Praises of Israel for many Ages for thy holiness. How? *Our Fathers trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them*; They honoured thy holiness by their trust and thou didst honour their Faith by a deliverance; thou alwaies hadst a Purity that would not shame nor confound them. I will trust in thee as thou art holy, and expect the breaking out of this Attribute for my good as well as my Predecessors; *Our Fathers trusted in thee &c.*

5. We honour this Attribute, *when we shew a greater Affection to the marks of his holiness in times of the greatest Contempt of it*. As the Psalmist, *Psal. 119. 126, 127. They have made void thy Law, therefore I love thy Commandments above Gold*. While they spurn at the Purity of thy Law, I will value it above the Gold they possess; I'll esteem it as Gold, because others count it as Dross: By their scorn of it, my love to it shall be the warmer, and my hatred of iniquity shall be the sharper: The disdain of others should enflame us with a zeal and fortitude to appear in the behalf of his despised Honour. We honour this Holiness many other ways; by preparation for our addresses to him out of a sense of his purity: *Psal. 119. 135.* When we imitate it; As he honours us by *teaching us his Statutes*\*; so we honour him by learning and observing them. When we beg of him to shew himself a Refiner of us, to make us more conformable to him in holiness, and bless him for any communication of it to us, it render us beautiful and lovely in his sight.

To conclude; To honour it is the way to engage it for us: To give it the glory of what it hath done by the arm of power for our rescue from Sin, and beating down our Corruptions at his feet, is the way to see more of its marvellous works, & behold a clearer brightness. As *unthankfulness* makes him withdraw his Grace\*, so glorifying him causes him to impart it. God honours men in the same way they honour him: When we honour him by acknowledging his Purity, he will honour us by communicating of it to us. This is the way to derive a greater excellency to our Souls.

3. *Exhortation*. Since holiness is an eminent Perfection of the Divine Nature, let us labour after a Conformity to God in this Perfection. The Nature of God is presented to us in the *Scripture*, both as a *pattern* to imitate, and a *Motive* to persuade the Creature to holiness. Since it is therefore the Nature of God, the more our Natures are beautified with it, the more like we are to the Divine Nature. 'Tis not the pattern of *Angels*, or *Arch-angels*, that our Saviour or his Apostle proposeth for our imitation, but the original of all Purity, *God himself*: The same that created us, to be imitated by us. Nor is an equal degree of Purity enjoyned us; though we are to be pure, and perfect, and merciful as God is, yet not essentially so; for that would be to command us an impossibility in itself; as much as to order us to cease to be Creatures, and commence Gods. No Creature can be essentially holy but by participation from the chief Fountain of holiness; but we must have the same kind of holiness, the same truth of holiness. As a short line may be as straight as another, though it parallel it not in the immense length of it: A copy may have the likeness of the Original, though not the same Perfection: We can not be good, without eying some exemplar of goodness as the Pattern. No pattern is so futable as that which is the highest Goodness and Purity. That Limner that would draw the most excellent piece, fixes his eyes upon the most perfect Pattern. He that would be a good *Orator*, or *Poet*, or *Artificer*, considers some person most excellent in each kind, as the Object of his imitation. Who so fit as God to be viewed, as the pattern of holiness, in our intendment of, and endeavor after holiness? The *Stoicks*, one of the best sects of *Philosophers*, advised their Disciples to pitch upon some eminent example of Vertue, according to which to form their lives; as *Socrates* &c. But true holiness doth not only endeavour to live the life of a good man, but chuses to live a divine life: As before the man was alienated from the life of God†, so upon his return he aspires after the

\* Eph. 4. 19.

† Joh. 3. 3.  
Marth. 5. 48.  
Lev. 11. 44.  
1 Pet. 1. 15, 16.



life of God. To endeavour to be like a good man, is to make one Image like another; to set our Clocks by other Clocks, without regarding the Sun: But true holiness consists in a likeness to the most exact Sampler. God being the first Purity, is the Rule as well as the Spring of all Purity in the Creature, the chief and first Object of Imitation. We disown our selves to be his Creatures, if we breath not after a resemblance to him in what he is imitable. There was in man, as created according to God's Image, a natural appetite to resemble God: It was at first planted in him by the Authour of his Nature. The Devils temptation of him by that Motive to transgress the Law, had been as an Arrow shot against a brazen Wall, had there not been a desire of some *likeness* to his Creator engraven upon him\*: It would have had no more influence upon him, than it could have had upon a meer Animal. But man mistook the term; he would have been like God in knowledge, whereas he should have affected a greater resemblance of him in Purity. O that we could exemplify God in our Nature! Precepts may instruct us more, but Examples affect us more; one directs us, but the other attracts us. What can be more attractive of our imitation, than that which is the Original of all Purity both in Men and Angels?

This conformity to him consists in an imitation of him,

1. *In his Law.* The Purity of his Nature was first visible in this Glass; hence 'tis called a *holy Law*, *Rom. 7. 12. a pure Law*, *Psal. 19. 8. Holy and pure*, as it is a Ray of the pure Nature of the Law-giver. When our Lives are a Comment upon his Law, they are expressive of his Holiness: We conform to his Holiness, when we regulate our selves by his Law, as it is a Transcript of his Holiness: We do not imitate it, when we do a thing in the matter of it agreeable to that holy Rule, but when we do it with respect to the Purity of the Law-giver beaming in it. If it be agreeable to God's will, and convenient for some design of our own, and we do any thing only with a respect to that design, we make not God's Holiness discovered in the Law our Rule, but our own conveniency: 'Tis not a conformity to God, but a conformity of our Actions to *Self*. As in abstinence from intemperate Courses, not because the holiness of God in his Law hath prescrib'd it, but because the health of our Bodies, or some noble Contentments of life require it; then it is not God's holiness that is our Rule, but our own security, conveniency, or some thing else which we make a God to our selves.

It must be a real conformity to the Law: Our holiness should shine as really in the practise, as God's Purity doth in the Precept. God hath not a pretence of Purity in his Nature, but a reality: 'Tis not only a suddain boiling up of an admiration of him, or a starting wish to be like him, from some suddain impression upon the Fancy, (which is a meer temporary blaze) but a settled temper of Soul, loving every thing that is like him, doing things out of a firm desire to resemble his Purity in the Copy he hath set; not a resting in *Negatives*, but aspiring to *Positives*; *Holy and harmless* are distinct things: They were distinct qualifications in our High Priest in his Obedience to the Law†, so they must be in us.

2. *In his Christ.* As the Law is the Transcript, so Christ is the Image of his Holiness: The glory of God is too dazling to be beheld by us: The acute eye of an Angel is too weak to look upon that bright Sun without covering his Face: We are much too weak to take our Measures from that Purity which is infinite in his Nature. But he hath made his Son like us, that by the imitation of him in that temper, and shadow of human *Flesh*, we may arrive to a resemblance of him||. || 2 Cor. 3. 18. Then there is a conformity to him, when that which Christ did is drawn in lively Colours in the Soul of a Christian; when as he died upon the Cross we dye to our sins; as he rose from the Grave, we rise from our Lusts; as he ascended on high, we mount our Souls thither: When we express in our lives what shined in his, and exemplifie in our hearts what he acted in the world, and become one with him, as he was separate from sinners. The holiness of God in Christ is our ultimate pattern: As we are not only to believe *in Christ*, but *by Christ in God*\*, so we are not only to imitate Christ, but the holiness of God as discovered in Christ.

And to enforce this upon us, let us consider

1. *'Tis this only wherein he commands our imitation of him.* We are not commanded to be mighty and wise, as God is mighty and wise; but *be holy as I am holy*.

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\* Gen. 3. 5.

† Heb. 7. 26.

|| 2 Cor. 3. 18.

\* John 14. 1.



\* In 1. 12.  
1. 12. 13.  
1. 12. 13.  
1. 12. 13.  
1. 12. 13.  
1. 12. 13.

\* Ezech. 1. 1.  
1. 1. 1.  
1. 1. 1.

3. The declarations of his power are to enforce our subjection; those of his wisdom to encourage our direction by him; but this only to attract our imitation. When he saith, *I am holy*, the immediate inference he makes, is *be ye so too*, which is not the proper instruction from any other Perfection. Man was created by Divine Power, and harmoniz'd by Divine Wisdom, but not after them, or according to them, as the true Image; this was the Prerogative of Divine Holiness, to be the Pattern of his Rational Creature: Wisdom and Power were subservient to this, the one as the Pensil, the other as the Hand that mov'd it. The condition of a Creature is too mean to have the communications of the Divine Essence, the true Impressions of his Righteousness and Goodness we are only capabl. of. 'Tis only in those moral Perfections we are said to resemble God. The Devils, those impure and ruin'd Spirits, are nearer to him in strength and knowledge than we are; yet in regard of that natural and intellectual Perfection, never counted like him, but at the greatest distance from him, because at the greatest distance from his Purity. God values not a natural Might, nor an acute Understanding, nor vouchsafes such Perfections the glorious Title of that of his Image. \* *Plutarch* saith, God is angry with those that imitate his Thunder or Lightning, his works of Majesty, but delighted with those that imitate his Vertue. In this only we can never incur any reproof from him, but for falling short of him and his glory. Had *Adam* endeavour'd after an imitation of this, instead of that of Divine Knowledge, he had escap'd his fall, and preserv'd his standing; And had *Lucifer* wish'd himself like God in this, as well as his Dominion, he had still been a glorious Angel, instead of being now a ghastly Devil: To reach after a Union with the Supreme Being in regard of holiness, is the only generous and commendable Ambition.

2. *This is the prime way of honouring God.* We do not to glorifie God by elevated Admirations, or eloquent Expressions, or pompous Services of him, as when we aspire to a conversing with him with unstained Spirits, and live to him in living like him. The Angels are not called holy for applauding his Purity, but conforming to it. The more perfect any Creature is in the rank of Beings, the more is the Creator honoured; As it is more for the honour of God to create an Angel or Man, than a meer Animal; because there are in such, clearer Characters of Divine power and goodness, than in those that are Inferiour. The more perfect any Creature is morally, the more is God glorified by that Creature; 'tis a real declaration that God is the best and most amiable Being; that nothing besides him is valuable, and worthy to be the Object of our imitation. 'Tis a greater honouring of him, than the highest acts of Devotion, and the most religious bodily Exercise, or the singing this *Song of Moses in the Text*, with a triumphant spirit. As it is more the honour of a Father to be imitated in his Vertues by his Son, than to have all the glavering Commendations by the Tongue or Pen of a vicious and debauch'd Child. By this we honour him in that Perfection which is dearest to him, and counted by him as the chiefest glory of his Nature. God seems to accept the glorifying this Attribute, as if it were a real addition to that holiness which is infinite in his Nature, and because infinite, cannot admit of any increase: And therefore the word *sanctified* is used instead of *glorified*, *Isa. 8. 13. Sanctifie the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.* And *Isa. 29. 23. They shall sanctifie the holy One of Jacob, and fear the God of Israel.* This sanctification of God is by the fear of him, which signifies in the Language of the Old Testament, a reverence of him, and a righteousness before him. He doth not say, when he would have his Power or Wisdom glorified, *empower me, or make me wise*; but when he would have holiness glorified by the Creature, 'tis *sanctifie me*; that is, manifest the purity of my Nature by the holiness of your lives: But he expresseth it in such a term, as if it were an addition to this infinite Perfection; so acceptable it is to him, as if it were a contribution from his Creature for the enlarging an Attribute so pleasing to him, and so glorious in his Eye. 'Tis as much as in the Creature lies, a preserving the life of God, since this Perfection is his Life; and that he would as soon part with his Life as part with his Purity. It keeps up the Reputation of God in the World, and attracts others to a love of him; whereas unworthy carriages defame God in the eyes of men, and bring up an ill report of him, as if he were such a one as those that profess him, and walk unsuitably to their Profession, appear to be.



3. *This is the excellency and beauty of a creature* The title of beauty is given to it in *Psal. 110. 3. beauties* in the plural number, as comprehending in it all other beauties, whatsoever. What is a Divine excellency can not be a Creatures Deformity: The natural beauty of it is a representation of the Divinity; and a holy man ought to esteem himself excellent, in being such in his measure as his God is, and puts his principal felicity in the possession of the same purity in Truth. This is the refin'd Complexion of the Angels that stand before his Throne. The Devils lost their comeliness when they fell from it. It was the honour of the humane Nature of our Saviour, not only to be united to the Deity, but to be sanctified by it. He was *fairer than all the Children of men*, because he had a holiness above the Children of men: *Grace was poured into his lips, Psal. 45. 2.* It was the Jewel of the reasonable Nature in paradise: Conformity to God was mans original happiness in his created state, and what was naturally so, cannot but be immutably so in its own Nature. The beauty of every copyed thing consists in its likeness to the Original: Every thing hath more of loveliness, as it hath greater impressions of its first Pattern: In this regard holiness hath more of beauty on it, than the whole Creation, because it partakes of a greater excellency of God than the *Sun, Moon, and Stars*. No greater glory can be, than to be a conspicuous and visible Image of the invisible, and holy, and blessed God. As this is the splendor of all the Divine Attributes, so it is the flower of all a Christians Graces, the Crown of all Religion: 'Tis the glory of the Spirit. In this regard the *Kings Daughter* is said to be all *glorious within* \*. 'Tis more excellent than the soul itself, since the greatest soul is but a deformed piece without it: (*A Diamond without lustre* †.) What are the noble faculties of the Soul without it, but as a curious rusty Watch, a delicate heap of Disorder and confusion? 'Tis impossible there can be beauty, where there are a multitude of *spots and wrinkles* that blemish a Countenance ‡. It can never be in its true brightness, but when it is perfect in Purity, when it regains what it was possessed of by Creation, and dispossessed of by the fall, and recovers its primitive temper. We are not so beautiful by being the work of God, as by having a stamp of God upon us. Worldly greatness may make men honourable in the sight of creeping worms. Soft lives, ambitious reaches, luxurious pleasures, and a pompous Religion render no man excellent and noble in the sight of God: This is not the excellency and nobility of the Deity which we are bound to resemble: Other lines of a Divine Image must be drawn in us to render us truly excellent.

4. *'Tis our life.* What is the life of God, is truly the life of a rational Creature \*. The life of the body consists not in the perfection of its Members, and the integrity of its Organs, these remain when the body becomes a Carcass; but in the presence of the Soul, and its vigorous animation of every part, to perform the distinct offices belonging to each of them. The life of the Soul consists not in its being, or spiritual substance, or the excellency of its Faculties of understanding and will, but in the moral and becoming operations of them. The spirit is only *life because of righteousness* \*. The Faculties are turned by it, to acquit themselves in their functions, according to the will of God; the absence of this doth not only deform the Soul, but in a sort annihilate it, in regard of its true essence and end: *Grace* gives a Christian being, and a want of it is the want of a true being, *Cor. 1. 15. 10.* When *Adam* divested himself of his original righteousness, he came under the force of the threatening, in regard of a spiritual death: Every person is *morally dead whiles he lives* an unholy life †. What life is to the body, that is righteousness to the Spirit; and the greater measure of holiness it hath, the more of life it hath, because it is in a greater nearness, and partakes more fully of the fountain of life. Is not that the most worthy life, which God makes most account of, without which his life could not be a pleasant and blessed life, but a life worse than death? What a miserable life is that of the men of the World, that are carried with greedy inclinations to all manner of unrighteousness, whither their interests or their lusts invite them? The most beautiful body is a Carcass, and the most honorable person hath but a brutish life ‡; miserable Creatures when their life shall be extinct without a Divine rectitude, when all other things will vanish as the shadows of the night at the appearance of the Sun.

\* *Psal. 45. 13.*† *Vaughan*‡ *5.*§ *Eph. 5. 27.*\* *Amirald. in Heb. p. 101, 102.*\* *Rom. 8. 10.*† *1. Tim. 5. 6.*‡ *Psal. 49. 20.*



Holiness is our life.

5. *Truth only fits us for Communion with God.* Since it is our beauty and our life, without it, what Communion can an excellent God have with deformed Creatures, a living God with dead Creatures? *Without Holiness none shall see God, Heb. 12. 14.* The Creature must be stript of his Unrighteousness, or God of his Purity, before they can come together. Likeness is the ground of Communion and of Delight in it: The opposition between God and unholy Souls, is as great as that between *light and darkness* \*. Divine fruition is not so much by a union of Presence, as a union of Nature. Heaven is not so much an outward, as an inward life; the foundation of Glory is laid in Grace; a resemblance to God is our vital happiness, without which the Vision of God would not be so much as a cloudy and shadowy happiness, but rather a torment than a felicity; unless we be of a like nature to God, we cannot have a pleasing fruition of him. Some *Philosophers* think, that if our Bodies were of the same nature with the Heavens, of an Ethereal Substance, the nearness to the Sun would cherish, not scorch us. Were we partakers of a Divine Nature, we might enjoy God with delight; whereas remaining in our unlikeness to him, we cannot think of him, and approach to him without terrour. As soon as sin had stript man of the Image of God, he was an Exile from the comfortable presence of God, unworthy for God to hold any correspondence with: He can no more delight in a defiled person, than a man can take a Toad into intimate converse with him; he would hereby discredit his own Nature, and justifie our Impurity. The holiness of a Creature only prepares him for an eternal conjunction with God in glory. *Enoch's* walking with God, was the cause of his being so soon waisted to the place of a full fruition of him; he hath as much delight in such, as in Heaven it self; one is his Habitation as well as the other: The one is his habitation of Glory, and the other is the house of his Pleasure: If he dwell in *Zion*, it must be a *holy Mountain* \*, and the Members of *Zion* must be upheld in their rectitude and integrity, before they be *set before the face of God for ever* †. Such are still'd his Jewels, his Portion, as if he lived upon them, as a man upon his Inheritance. As God cannot delight in us, so neither can we delight in God without it. We must *purifie* our selves *as he is pure*, if we expect to *see him as he is* in the comfortable glory and beauty of his Nature ‡, else the sight of God would be terrible and troublesome: We cannot be satisfied with the likeness of God at the Resurrection, unless we have a *righteousness* wherewith to *behold his face* \*. 'Tis a vain imagination in any to think that Heaven can be a place of happiness to him, in whose eye the Beauty of Holiness, which fills and adorns it, is an unlovely thing: Or that any can have a satisfaction in that Divine Purity which is loathsome to him in the imitations of it. We cannot enjoy him, unless we resemble him; nor take any pleasure in him if we were with him, without something of likeness to him.

Holiness fits us for Communion with God.

6. *We can have no evidence of our Election and Adoption without it.* Conformity to God in Purity, is the fruit of electing Love, *Eph. 1. 4.* *He hath chosen us that we should be holy.* The goodness of the Fruit evidenceth the nature of the Root: This is the Seal that assures us the Patent is the Authentick Grant of the Prince. Whatsoever is holy, speaks itself to be from God; and whosoever is holy, speaks himself to belong to God. This is the only evidence that *we are born of God* \*. The subduing our souls to him, the forming us into a resemblance to himself, is a more certain sign we belong to him, than if we had with *Isaiah* seen his glory in the Vision with all his train of Angels about him. This justifies us to be the seed of God, when he hath as it weretaken a slip from his own Purity, and engrafted it in our Spirits: He can never own us for his Children without his mark, the stamp of holiness. The Devils stamp is none of Gods Badge, Our spiritual extraction from him is but pretended, unless we do things worthy of so illustrious a Birth, and becoming the honour of so great a Father: What evidence can we else have of any child-like love to God, since the proper act of love is to imitate the Object of our Affections?

And



And that we may be in some measure like to God in this excellent Perfection;

1. *Let us be often viewing and ruminating on the holiness of God, especially as discovered in Christ:* 'Tis by a believing meditation on him, that we are *changed into the same image*†. We can think often of nothing that is excellent in the World, <sup>† Cor. 3. 18.</sup> but it draws our Faculties to some kind of suitable operation; and why should not such an excellent *Idea* of the holiness of God in Christ perfect our understandings, and awaken all the powers of our Souls to be formed to actions worthy of him? A *Painter* employed in the limning some excellent Piece, has not only his Pattern before his eyes, but his eye frequently upon the Pattern, to possess his fancy to draw forth an exact resemblance. He that would express the Image of God, must imprint upon his Mind the purity of his Nature; Cherish it in his thoughts, that the excellent beauty of it may pass from his Understanding to his Affections, and from his Affections to his Practice. How can we arise to a conformity to God in Christ, whose most holy nature we seldom glance upon, and more rarely sink our Souls into the depths of it by meditation? Be frequent in the meditation of the holiness of God.

2. *Let us often exercise our selves in acts of love to God, because of this Perfection.* The more adoring thoughts we have of God, the more delightfully we shall aspire to, & more ravishingly catch after any thing, that may promote the more full draught of his Divine Image in our hearts. What we intensely affect, we desire to be as near to as we can, and to be that very thing rather than our selves. All imitations of others, arise from an intense love to their persons or excellency. When the Soul is ravish'd with this Perfection of God, it will desire to be united with it; to have it drawn in it, more than to have its own being continued to it. It will desire and delight in its own being, in order to this heavenly and spiritual work. The impressions of the Nature of God upon it, and the imitations of the Nature of God by it, will be more desirable than any natural perfection whatsoever. The Will in loving is rendred like the object beloved; is turned into its nature †, and imbibes its qualities. <sup>† Amor naturam induit & moris imbibit rei amae. i.e.</sup> The Soul by loving God, will find it self more and more transform'd into the Divine Image, whereas slighted ensamples are never thought worthy of Imitation.

3. *Let us make God our end.* Every mans mind forms itself to a likeness to that which it makes its chief end. An earthly Soul is as drossy as the Earth he gapes for: An ambitious Soul is as elevated as the honour he reaches at: The same Characters that are upon the thing aimed at, will be imprinted upon the Spirit of him that aims at it. When God and his glory are made our end, we shall find a silent likeness pass in upon us; the Beauty of God will by degrees enter upon our Souls.

4. *In every deliberate action, let us reflect upon the Divine Purity as a pattern.* Let us examine whither any thing we are prompted unto, bear an impression of God upon it: Whether it looks like a thing, that God himself would do in that case, were he in our Natures and in our Circumstances. See whether it hath the livery of God upon it, how congruous it is to his Nature: whether, and in what manner the holiness of God can be glorified thereby; and let us be industrious in all this: For can such an imitation be easy which is resisted by the constant assaults of the Flesh, which is discouraged by our own ignorance, and deprest by our faint and languishing Desires after it? O! happy we, if there were such a Heart in us.

5. *A fourth Exhortation.* If holiness be a Perfection belonging to the Nature of God; then, *where there is some weak conformity to the holiness of God, let us labour to grow up in it, and breath after fuller measures of it.* The more likeness we have to him, the more love we shall have from him. Communion will be suitable to our imitation; his love to himself in his Essence, will cast out beams of love to himself in his Image. If God loves holiness in a lower measure, much more will he love it in a higher degree, because then his Image is more illustrious and beautiful, and comes nearer to the lively lineaments of his own Infinite Purity. Perfection in any thing is more lovely and amiable than Imperfection in any state; and the nearer any thing arrives to Perfection, the further are those things separated from it which might Cool an affection to it. An increase in holiness is attended with a manifestation of his love, *Joh. 14. 21. He that hath my Commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me, and he shall be loved of my Fa-*



*Father, and I will love him, and I will manifest my self to him:* Tis a testimony of love to God, and God will not be behind hand with the Creature in kindness: He loves a holy man for some resemblance to him in his Nature; but when there is an abounding in Sanctified dispositions suitable to it, there is an increase of favour: The more we resemble the Original, the more shall we enjoy the blessedness of that Original: As any partake more of the Divine likeness, they partake more of the Divine happiness.

Plal. 99. 5.

Plal. 1. 15.

\* Job. 11. 13, 14.

† Mal. 3. 3, 4.

5. *Exhortation. Let us carry our selves holily in a spiritual manner in all our religious approaches to God; Psal. 93. 5. Holiness becomes thy house, O Lord, forever.* This Attribute should work in us a deep and reverential respect to God. This is the reason rendred why we should *worship at his foot-stool*, in the lowest posture of humility prostrate before him, because *he is holy*†. Shoes must be put off from our feet, *Exod. 3. 5.* that is, Lusts from our Affections, every thing that our souls are clogged and bemired with, as the Shoe is with dirt. He is not willing we should offer to him an impure soul, mired hearts, rotten carcases, putrified in vice, rotten in iniquity: Our Services are to be as free from prophaneſs, as the sacrifices of the Law were to be free from sickness or any blemish. Whatsoever is contrary to his Purity is *abhorred* by him, and unlovely in his sight, and can meet with no other *success* at his hands, but a disdainful turning away both of his eye and ear||. Since he is an Immense purity, he will reject from his presence, and from having any communion with him, all that which is not conformable to him; as light chases away the darkness of the night, and will not mix with it. If we *stretch out our hands towards him*, we must *put iniquity farr away from us*\*; the fruits of all Service will else drop off to nothing. *Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant to the Lord*; When? when the heart is *purged* by Christ sitting as a *purifier of silver*†. Not all the Incense of the *Indies* yield him so sweet a Savour, as one spiritual act of worship from a heart estranged from the vileness of the World, and ravilht with an affection to, and a desire of imitating the Purity of his Nature.

|| Isa. 43. 15.

\* Psal. 24. 11.

6. *Exhortation. Let us address for holiness to God the fountain of it.* As he is the Author of bodily life in the Creature, so he is the Author of his own life, the life of God in the soul. By his holiness he makes men holy, as the Sun by his light enlightens the Air. He is not only the Holy One, but *our holy One*||: *The Lord that sanctifies us*, *Levit. 20. 8.* As he hath mercy to pardon us, so he hath holiness to purify us, the excellency of being a Sun to comfort us and a Shield to protect us, giving *Grace and Glory*\*. Grace whereby we may have Communion with him to our comfort, and strength against our spiritual enemies for our defence; Grace as our preparatory to glory, and Grace growing up till it ripen in Glory. He only can mould us into a Divine frame. The great Original can only derive the excellency of his own Nature to us. We are too low, too lame to lift up our selves to it; too much in love with our own Deformity, to admit of this Beauty without a heavenly power inclining our desires for it, our affections to it, our willingness to be partakers of it. He can as soon set the beauty of Holiness in a deformed heart, as the beauty of Harmony in a confused mass when he made the World. He can as soon cause the light of Purity to rise out of the darkness of Corruption, as frame glorious spirits out of the insufficiency of nothing. His beauty doth not decay, he hath as much in himself now as he had in his eternity: He is as ready to impart it, as he was at the Creation; only we must wait upon him for it, and be content to have it by small measures and degrees. There is no fear of our sanctification, if we come to him as a God of holiness, since he is a God of peace, and the breach made by *Adam* is repaired by Christ, *Thef. 1. 5. 23. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly*, &c. He restores the sanctifying spirit which was withdrawn by the Fall, as he is a God pacified and his holiness righted by the Redeemer. The beauty of it appears in its smiles upon a man in Christ, and is as ready to impart it self to the reconcil'd Creature, as before Justice was to punish the rebellious one. He loves to send forth the streams of this perfection into created Channels, more than any else. He did not design the making the Creature so powerfull as he might, because power is not such an excellency in its own Nature, but as it is conducted and managed by some other excellency. Power is indifferent and may be used well



or ill according as the possessor of it is righteous or unrighteous. God makes not the Creature so powerful as he might, but he delights to make the Creature that waits upon him as holy as it can be, beginning it in this world and ripening it in the other: 'Tis from him we must expect it, and from him that we must begg it, and draw Arguments from the holiness of his Nature to move him to work holiness in our Spirits: We cannot have a stronger plea. Purity is the favourite of his own Nature; and delights itself in the resemblances of it in the Creature. Let us also go to God, to preserve what he hath already wrought and imparted. As we cannot attain it, so we cannot maintain it without him. God gave it *Adam*, and he lost it: When God gives it us, we shall lose it without his influencing and preserving Grace: The chanel will be without a Stream, if the Fountain do not bubble it forth; and the streams will vanish, if the Fountain doth not constantly supply them. Let us apply our selves to him for holiness as he is a God *glorious in holiness*: By this we honour God, and advantage our selves.







A  
DISCOURSE  
UPON THE  
Goodness of God.

Mark 10. 18.

*And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.*

**T**HE words are part of a Reply of our Saviour to the Young-mans Petition to him: A certain Person came in haste, *running*, as being eager for satisfaction, to entreat his directions, what he should do, to inherit Everlasting Life; The Person is described only in general, *vers. 17. There came one*, A certain Man: But *Luke* describes him by his Dignity, \* *A certain Ruler*; One of Authority among the *Jews*. He desires of him an Answer to a legal Question, [*What he should do?*] Or, as *Matthew* hath it, *What good thing shall I do, that I may have Eternal Life?* \* He imagin'd Everlasting Felicity was to be purchased by the works of the Law; He had not the least Sentiments of Faith: *Christ's* Answer implies, there was no hopes of the happiness of another World by the works of the Law, unless they were perfect, and answerable to every Divine Precept. He doth not seem to have any ill, or hypocritical intent in his Address to Christ; not to tempt him, but to be instructed by him. He seems to come with an ardent desire, to be satisfi'd in his Demand; he performed a solemn act of Respect to him, *he kneeled to him*, *prostrated himself upon the ground*; Besides Christ is said, *vers. 21. to love him*, which had been inconsistent with the knowledge Christ had of the hearts and thoughts of Men, and the abhorrence he had of Hypocrites, had he been only a Counterfeit in this Question.

\* *Luke 18. 18.*

\* *Mat. 19. 16.*

But the first Reply Christ makes to him, respects the Title of *Good Master*, which this Ruler gave him in his Salutation.

1. Some think, that Christ hereby would draw him to an *acknowledgment of him as God*; You acknowledge me *good*, How come you to salute me with so great a Title, since you do not afford it to your greatest Doctors? *Lightfoot in loc.* observes, that the Title of *Rabbi bone* is not in all the *Talmud*. You must own me to be *God*, since you own me to be *good*: *Goodness* being a Title only due and properly belonging to the Supream Being.

If you take me for a Common-man, with what Conscience can you salute me in a manner proper to God? Since no Man is *good*, no, not one, but the heart of Man is evil continually. The *Arrians* used this place, to back their denying the Deity of Christ: Because, say they, He did not acknowledge himself *good*, therefore he did not acknowledge himself *God*. \* But he doth not here deny his Deity, but reproves him for calling him *Good*, when he had not yet confest him to be more than a Man. \* You behold my *Flesh*, but you consider

\* *Erasm. in loc.*

\* *Augustin.*

F f f

imagine



imagine me not to be a simple and a meer Man. He disowns not his own Deity, but allures the Young-man to a confession of it. Why callst thou me good, since thou dost not discover any apprehensions of my being more than a Man? Though thou comest with a greater Esteem to me, than is commonly entertain'd of the Doctors of the Chair, why dost thou own me to be good, unless thou own me to be God? If Christ had deny'd himself in this Speech to be good, he had rather entertain'd this Person with a frown and sharp reproof for giving him a Title due to God alone, than have received him with that, courtesie, and complaisance as he did\*. Had he said there is none good but the Father, he had excluded himself; but in saying, there is none good but God, he comprehends himself.

\* Hensius in  
Saurb.

2. Others say, that Christ had *no intention to draw him to an acknowledgment of his Deity*, but only asserts his *Divine Authority*, or Mission from God.

\* Calvin in loc.

\* For which interpretation Maldonat calls Calvin an *Arrianizer*. He doth not here assert the Essence of his Deity, but the Authority of his Doctrine: As if he should have said, you do without ground give me the Title of good, unless you believe I have a Divine Commission for what I declare and act. Many do think me an Impostor, an Enemy of God, and a friend to Devils; you must firmly believe, that I am not so as your Rulers report me, but that I am sent of God, and authorized by him; you cannot else give me the Title of good, but of wicked. And the reason they give for this interpretation, is, because it is a question, whether any of the *Apostles* understood him at this time, to be God, which seems to have no great strength in it; since not only the Devil had publickly owned him, to be the *Holy One of God*\*, but *John the Baptist* had born Record, that he was the *Son of God*†; and before this time *Peter* had confest him openly, in the hearing of the rest of the Disciples, that he was the *Christ the Son of the living God*‡. But I think *Paraus* his interpretation is best, which takes in both those; Either you are serious or deceitful in this Address; if you are serious, Why do you call me good, and make bold to fix so great a Title upon one you have no higher thoughts of than of a meer Man? Christ takes occasion from hence, to assert God to be only and Sovereignly good; \* *There is none good but God*. God only hath the honour of *absolute goodness*, and none but God merits the name of good. || A Heathen could say much after the same manner: All other things are far from the nature of good; call none else good but God, for this would be a profane Errour: Other things are only good in opinion, but have not the true Substance of Goodness: He is Good in a more excellent way, than any Creature can be denominated Good.

\* Luke 4. 34.  
† Job 1. 32, 34.

‡ Act. 16. 16.

\* Trilinguist.  
Pamand.  
c. p. 2.  
Fugubin de  
Peren. Philos.  
lib. 5. cap. 9.

1. *God is only Originally Good, Good of himself.* All Created Goodness is a Rivulet from this Fountain, but *Divine Goodness* hath no Spring; God depends upon no other for his Goodness, he hath it in, and of himself: Man hath no Goodness from himself, God hath no Goodness from without himself: His Goodness is no more derived from another, than his Being: If he were Good by any External thing, that thing must be in being before him, or after him; If before him, he was not then himself from Eternity; If after him, he was not Good in himself from Eternity. The End of his Creating things then, was not to confer a Goodness upon his Creatures, but to partake of a Goodness from his Creatures. *God is Good by and in himself*, since all things are only Good by him; and all that Goodness which is in Creatures, is but the breathing of his own Goodness upon them. They have all their loveliness from the same Hand they have their Being from. Though by Creation God was declared Good, yet he was not made Good by any, or by all the Creatures. He partakes of none, but all things partake of him. He is so Good that he gives all, and receives nothing; *Only Good* because nothing is Good but by him: Nothing hath a Goodness but from him.

2. *God only is Infinitely Good.*

A boundless Goodness that knows no limits, a Goodness as infinite as his Essence, not only Good, but best; not only Good, but Goodness it self, the Supreme unconceivable Goodness. All things else are but little Particles of God, small Sparks from this Immense Flame, Sips of Goodness to this Fountain. No-  
thing



thing that is good by his influence, can equal him, who is good by himself: Derived goodness, can never equal Primitive goodness. Divine Goodness communicates it self to a vast number of Creatures in various degrees; to Angels, Glorifi'd Spirits, Men on Earth, to every Creature; and when it hath communicated all that the present World is capable of, there is still less display'd, than left to enrich another World. All possible Creatures are not capable of exhausting the Wealth, the Treasures, that Divine Bounty is filled with.

3. *God is only perfectly good*, because only Infinitely good.

He is good without indigence, because he hath the whole Nature of goodness, not only some beams that may admit of increase of degree. As in him is the whole Nature of Entity, so in him is the whole Nature of Excellency. As nothing hath an absolute perfect Being but God, so nothing hath an *absolutely perfect goodness* but God. As the Sun hath a perfection of heat in it, but what is warm'd by the Sun, is but imperfectly hot, and equals not the Sun in that perfection of heat, wherewith it is naturally endued. The goodness of God is the measure and rule of goodness in every thing else.

4. *God only is Immutably good.*

Other things may be perpetually good by Supernatural Power, but not *Immutably good* in their own Nature. Other things are not so good, but they may be bad; God is so good, that he cannot be bad. \* It was the Speech of a *Philosopher*, That it was a hard thing to find a good Man, yea impossible; but though it were possible to find a good Man, he would be good but for some moment, or a short time: For though he should be good at this instant, it was above the Nature of Man to continue in a habit of goodness, without going awry and warping. But *the goodness of God endureth for ever* †. God always glitters in goodness, as the Sun, which the Heathens call'd the visible Image of the Divinity, doth with light. There is not such a perpetual light in the Sun, as there is a fulness of goodness in God; *no variableness* in him, as he is the *Father of Lights*. \*

\* Eugubin.  
Peren. Philof.  
lib. 5. cap. 9. §.  
97. col. 1.

† Psal. 92. 1.

\* 1 James 17.

Before I come to the *Doctrine*, that is the chief scope of the words, some remarks may be made upon the Young-mans *Question* and *Carriage*, *What must I do, to inherit Eternal Life?*

1. *The opinion of gaining Eternal Life by the outward observation of the Law, will appear very unsatisfactory to an inquisitive Conscience.* This Ruler affirm'd, and certainly did confidently believe, that he had fulfill'd the Law: *All this have I observed from my youth*; yet he had not any full satisfaction in his own Conscience; his heart misgave, and started upon some Sentiments in him, that something else was requir'd, and what he had done might be too weak, too short to shoot Heavens lock for him. And to that purpose he comes to Christ, to receive Instructions for the piecing up whatsoever was defective. Whosoever will consider the Nature of God, and the Relation of a Creature, cannot with reason think, that Eternal Life was of it self due from God as a Recompence to Adam, had he persisted in a State of Innocence: Who can think so great a Reward due, for having perform'd that, which a Creature in that Relation was oblig'd to do? Can any Man think another oblig'd to convey an Inheritance of 1000 l. per annum upon his payment of a few Farthings, unless any compact appears to support such a conceit? And if it were not to be expected in the integrity of Nature, but only from the goodness of God, how can it be expected since the Revolt of Man, and the Universal Deluge of Natural Corruption? God owes nothing to the holiest Creature; what he gives is a present from his Bounty, not the Reward of the Creatures Merit. And the Apostle defies all Creatures from the greatest to the least, from the tallest Angel to the lowest Shrub, to bring out any one Creature, that hath first given to God; \* *Who hath first given to him; And it shall be Recompenced to him again?* The Duty of the Creature, and Gods gift of Eternal Life is not a Bargain and Sale.

Verf. 20.

\* Rom. 11. 35.

God gives to the Creature, he doth not properly repay: For he that repays hath received something of an equal value, and worth before. When God Crowns Angels and Men, he bestows upon them purely what is his own, not what is theirs by Merit and Natural Obligation: Though indeed what God



\* Amyraut  
Morale.

gives by virtue of a Promise made before, is upon the performance of the Condition due by gracious Obligation. God was not indebted to Man in Innocence, but every Mans Conscience may now mind him, that he is not upon the same level as in the State of Integrity; And that he cannot expect any thing from God, as the Salary of his Merit, but the free gift of Divine Liberality. \* Man is oblig'd to the practice of what is good, both from the Excellency of the Divine Precepts, and the Duty he owes to God, and cannot without some Declaration from God, hope for any other Reward, than the satisfaction of having well acquitted himself.

2. 'Tis the Disease of Humane Nature since its Corruption, to hope for Eternal Life by the tenor of the Covenant of Works.

† 1 Cor. 17.

Though this Rulers Conscience was not thoroughly satisfy'd with what he had done, but imagin'd he might for all that, fall short of Eternal Life, yet he still hugs the imagination of obtaining it by doing, † *What shall I do, that I may inherit Eternal Life?* This is natural to Corrupted Man: Cain thought to be accepted for the sake of his Sacrifice; and when he found his mistake, he was so weary of seeking Happiness by doing, that he would court Misery by Murdering. All Men set too high a value upon their own Services: Sinful Creatures would fain make God a Debtor to them, and be Purchasers of Felicity; They would not have it conveyed to them by Gods Sovereign Bounty, but by an obligation of Justice upon the value of their Works. The *Heathens* thought God would treat Men according to the Merit of their Services; and it is no wonder they should have this Sentiment, when the *Jews* Educated by God in a wiser School, were wedded to that Notion. The *Pharisees* were highly fond of it, it was the only Argument they used in Prayer, for Divine Blessing: You have one of them boasting of his frequency in *Fasting*, and his exactness in paying his *Tithes* †; as if God had been beholding to him, and could not without manifest wrong deny him his demand. And *Paul* confesseth it to be his own Sentiment before his Conversion, he accounted this *Righteousness of the Law* gain to him\*; he thought by this to make his Market with God. The whole Nation of the *Jews* affected it, † *compassing Sea and Land* to make out a Righteousness of their own, as the *Pharisees* did to make *Proselytes*.

† Luke 19. 12.

\* Phil. 3. 7.

† Rom. 10. 3.  
Going about to  
Establish their  
own Righte-  
ousness.

The *Papists* follow their Steps, and Dispute for Justification by the Merit of Works, and find out another Key of Works of Supererogation, to unlock Heavens Gate, than what ever the *Scripture* informed us of: 'Tis from hence also, that Men are so ready to make Faith as a Work, the cause of our Justification. Man foolishly thinks he hath enough to set up himself after he hath proved Bankrupt, and lost all his Estate. This Imagination is born with us, and the best Christians may find some sparks of it in themselves, when there are springings up of joy in their Hearts, upon the more close performance of one Duty than of another, as if they had wiped off their Scores, and given God a satisfaction for their former neglects. *We have forsaken all and follow'd thee*, was the boast of his Disciples: *What shall we have therefore?* was a Branch of this Root †. Eternal Life is a gift not by any Obligation of Right, but an abundance of goodness; 'tis owing not to the dignity of our Works, but the magnificent Bounty of the Divine Nature, and must be sued for by the Title of God's Promise, not by the Title of the Creatures Services. We may observe,

† Mat. 19. 27.

3. *How insufficient are some Assents to Divine Truth, and some Expressions of Affection to Christ, without the Practice of Christian Precepts.* This Man Address'd to Christ with a profound Respect, acknowledging him more than an ordinary Person, with a more Reverential Carriage than we read any of his Disciples paid to him in the days of his Flesh; he fell down at his Feet, kist his Knees, as the Custom was, when they would testify the great Respect, they had to any eminent Person, especially to their *Rabbins*. All this some think to be included in the word *adoration*; † He seems to acknowledge him the *Messiah* by giving him the Title of *Good*, a Title they did not give to their Doctors of the Chair; He breaths out his opinion, that he was able to instruct him beyond the ability of the Law; He came with a more than ordinary Affection to him, and

† 1 Cor. 14.  
Lightfoot in  
loc.



and expectation of advantage from him, evident by his departing sad; when his expectations were frustrated by his own perversity; it was a sign he had a high esteem of him, from whom he could not part without marks of his Grief. What was the cause of his refusing the instructions, he pretended such an affection to receive? He had Possessions in the World. How soon do a few drops of Wordly advantages quench the first Sparks of an ill grounded love to *Christ*? How vain is a complemental and cringing devotion, without a supream preference of God, and valuation of *Christ* above every outward allurements? We may observe this,

4. *We should never admit any thing to be ascrib'd to us, which is proper to God. Why callest thou me Good? There is none Good but One, that is God.* If you do not acknowledge me God, ascribe not to me the Title of Good. It takes off all those Titles which fawning Flatterers give to Men, Mighty, Invincible to *Princes*, Holiness to the *Pope*. We call one another Good, without considering how Evil; and Wise, without considering how Foolish; Mighty, without considering how Weak; and Knowing without considering how Ignorant. No man but hath more of Wickedness than Goodness; of Ignorance than Knowledge; of Weakness than Strength. God is a jealous God of his own Honour, he will not have the Creature share with him in his Royal Titles. 'Tis a part of Idolatry to give Men the Titles which are due to God; a kind of a Worship of the Creature together with the Creator. Worms will not stand out, but assault *Herod* in his Purple, when he Usurps the Prerogative of God; and prove stiff and invincible Vindicators of their Creators Honor, when summoned to Arms by the Creators Word†.

The Observation which I intend to prosecute is this:

*Pure and Perfect Goodness is only the Royal Prerogative of God: Goodness is a choice Perfection of the Divine Nature.*

This is the true and genuine Character of God; He is Good, He is Goodness, Good in Himself, Good in his Essence, Good in the Highest Degree, possessing whatsoever is Comely, Excellent, Desirable; the Highest Good, because the First Good; whatsoever is perfect Goodness, is GOD; whatsoever is truly Goodness in any Creature, is a resemblance of God\*. All the Names of God are comprehended in this one of Good. All Gifts, all variety of Goodness, are contained in him as one common Good. He is the efficient cause of all Good, by an over-flowing Goodness of his Nature; He refers all things to Himself as the end, for the representation of his own Goodness; *Truly God is Good*†. Certainly it is an undoubted Truth, 'tis written in his Works of Nature; and his Acts of Grace\*, *He is abundant in Goodness*.

And every thing is a Memorial, not of some few Sparks, but of his greater Goodness†. This is often celebrated in the *Psalms*, and Men invited more than once, to Sing forth the Praises of it†. It may better be admired than sufficiently spoken of or thought of, as it Merits. 'Tis discovered in all his Works, as the Goodness of a Tree in all its Fruits; 'tis easie to be seen, and more pleasant to be contemplated. In General,

1. *All Nations in the World have acknowledged GOD Good*, *Ti' A. 30.* was one of the Names the *Platonists* exprest him by, and Good, and God are almost the same words in our Language. All as readily consented in the Notion of his Goodness, as in that of his Deity. Whatsoever divisions or disputes there were among them in the other Perfections of God, they all agreed in this without dispute, saith *Synesius*\*. One calls him *Venus*, in regard of his Loveliness†. Another calls him *Ἔρως*, Love, as being the Band which tyes all things together. No Perfection of the Divine Nature is more eminently, nor more speedily visible in the whole Book of the Creation than this. His Greatness shines not in any part of it, where his Goodness doth not as gloriously glister. Whatsoever is the Instrument of his Work, as his Power; Whatsoever is the Orderer of his Work, as his Wisdom; yet nothing can be Ador'd as the Motive of his VVork, but the Goodness of his Nature. This only could induce him, to resolve to Create: His VVildom then steps in, to dispose the Methods of what he resolved; And his Power follows to execute, what his VVildom hath disposed, and his Goodness

† 12 Acts 13.  
23.

Do3.

\* *Ficin. in  
Dionys. de  
divin. nom.  
cap 511.*

† *Psal. 73. 1.  
\* Exod. 34. 6.*

† *Psal. 145. 7.  
\* Psal. 107. 3.  
15. 11. 31.*

\* *Empedocles  
† Hesiod.*



ness design'd. His Power in making, and his VVildom in ordering, are subser-  
vient to his *Goodness*; and this *Goodness* which is the end of the Creation, is as  
visible to the Eyes of Men, as legible to the Understanding of Men, as his  
Power in forming them, and his VVildom in tuning them. And as the Book of  
Creation, so the Records of his Government must needs acquaint them with a  
great part of it, when they have often beheld him, stretching out his Hand,  
to supply the Indigent, relieve the Oppressed, and punish the Oppressors,  
and give them in their Distresses, what might fill their Hearts with Food and  
Gladness. 'Tis this the *Apostle* \* means by his *Godhead*, which he links with his  
Eternity and Power, as clearly seen in the things that are made, as in a pure  
Glas. For the invisible things of him from the Creation of the World, are clearly  
seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and  
Godhead. The Godhead, which comprehends the whole Nature of God as dis-  
coverable to his Creatures, was not known, yea was impossible to be known  
by the VVorks of Creation. There had been nothing then reserv'd to be mani-  
fested in *Christ*. But his *Goodness*, which is properly meant there by his *God-  
head*, was as clearly visible as his Power. The *Apostle* upbraids them with their  
Unthankfulness, and argues their inexcusableness, because the Arm of his Power  
in Creation made no due impressions of fear upon their Spirits, nor the Beams  
of his Goodness wrought in them sufficient sentiments of Gratitude. Their  
not glorifying God, was a contempt of the former, and their not being thank-  
ful, was a slight of the later. God is the Object of Honor, as he is Powerful,  
and the Object of Thankfulness properly, as he is bountiful.

All the Idolatry of the Heathens, is a clear testimony of their common sen-  
timent of the Goodness of God: Since the more eminently useful any person  
was in some advantagious Invention for the benefit of Mankind, they thought  
he merited a Rank in the number of their Deities. The *Italians* esteemed *Py-  
thagoras* a God because he was *φίλας τῶν ἀνθρώπων* †: To be Good and Useful, was an  
Approximation to the Divine Nature: Hence it was, that when the *Lystrians*  
saw a resemblance of the Divine Goodness in the charitable and miraculous Cure  
of one of their Crippled Citizens, presently they mistook *Paul* and *Barnabas*  
for Gods, and inferred from thence their right to Divine VVorship, inquiring  
into nothing else but the visible Character of their goodness, and usefulness, to  
capacitate them for the Honor of a Sacrifice †. Hence it was that they adored  
those Creatures, that were a common Benefit, as the Sun, and Moon, which must  
be founded upon a præexistent Notion not only of the Being, but of the Boun-  
ty, and Goodness of God, which was naturally implanted in them, and legible  
in all Gods VVorks. And the more beneficial any thing was to them, and the  
more sensible advantages they received from it, the higher station they gave it  
in the rank of their Idols, and bestow'd upon it a more solemn VVorship. An  
absurd mistake to think every thing that was sensibly good to them, to be God,  
cloathing himself in such a form, to be adored by them. And upon this account  
the *Egyptians* worshipped God under the figure of an Ox, and the *East Indians*  
in some parts of their Country Deifie a Heyfer, intimating the Goodness of  
God as their Nourisher and Preserver, in giving them Corn, whereof the Ox is  
an instrument in serving for Plowing, and preparing the Ground.

2. The Notion of Goodness is inseparable from the Notion of a God.

VVe cannot own the Existence of God, but we must confess also the Goodness  
of his Nature. Hence the *Apostle* gives to his Goodness the Title of  
his Godhead, as if *Goodness* and *Godhead* were convertible terms \*. As it  
is indissolubly linkt with the Being of a Deity, so it cannot be sever'd from  
the Notion of it: We as soon Undeify him by denying him Good, as by denying  
him Great: *Optimus*, *Maximus*, the Best, Greatest, was the name whereby the  
*Romans* entitl'd Him. His Nature is as Good, as it is Majestick; so doth the  
*Psalmist* join them \*. I will declare thy Greatness, they shall abundantly utter  
the memory of thy great Goodness. They considered his Goodness before his  
Greatness, in putting *Optimus* before *Maximus*; Greatness without Sweetness,  
is an unruly and affrighting Monster in the VVorld; like a vast turbulent Sea,  
always casting out Mire, and Dirt. Goodness is the brightness, and loveliness  
of

\* 1 Rom. 10,  
21.

† *Timothy* vit.  
*Pythag.* lib. 1.  
60. 6. p. 43.

† *Acts* 14 8, 9,  
10, 11.

\* *Rom.* 1. 20.

\* *Psal.* 145. 6,  
7.



of our Majestical Creator. To fancy a God without it, is to fancy a miserable, scanty, narrow-hearted savage God, and so an unlovely, and horrible Being: For he is not a God that is not Good, he is not a God that is not the highest Good: Infinite Goodness is more necessary to, and more straitly joined with an infinite Deity, than infinite Power, and infinite Wisdom: We cannot conceive him God, unless we conceive him the highest Good, having nothing superiour to Himself in Goodness; as he hath nothing Superiour to Himself, in Excellency, and Perfection. No man can possibly form a Notion of God in his Mind, and yet form a Notion of something better than God: for whoever thinks any thing better than God, fancieth a God with some defect: By how much the better he thinks that thing to be, by so much the more imperfect he makes God in his thoughts. This Notion of the Goodness of God was so natural, that some *Philosophers* and others, being startled at the Evil they saw in the World, fancy'd besides a good God, an evil Principle, the Author of all Punishments in the World. This was ridiculous; for those two must be of equal Power, or one inferiour to the other; If Equal, the Good could do nothing, but the Evil one would restrain him; and the Evil one could do nothing, but the Good one would contradict him: So they would be always contending and never conquering: If one were inferiour to the other, then there would be nothing but what that Superiour order'd. Good, if the Good one were Superiour, and nothing but Evil, if the Bad one were Superiour. In the prosecution of this let us see,

1. *What this Goodness is.*
2. *Some Propositions concerning the nature of it.*
3. *That God is Good.*
4. *The manifestation of it, in Creation, Providence, and Redemption.*
5. *The Use.*

1. *What this Goodness is?*

There is a Goodness of Being, which is the natural perfection of a thing; There is the Goodness of Will, which is the Holiness, and Righteousness of a Person; There is the Goodness of the Hand, which we call Liberality, or Beneficence, a doing good to others.

1. We mean not by this, *The Goodness of his Essence, or the Perfection of his Nature.* God is thus Good, because his Nature is infinitely Perfect, He hath all things requisite to the compleating of a most Perfect and Sovereign Being. *All Good meets in his Essence*, as all Water meets in the Ocean. Under this Notion all the Attributes of God, which are requisite to so illustrious a Being, are comprehended. All things that are, have a goodness of being in them, derived to them by the Power of God, as they are Creatures; so the Devil is good, as he is a Creature of Gods making: He hath a natural goodness, but not a moral goodness: when he fell from God, he retained his natural goodness as a Creature; because he did not cease to be, he was not reduced to that nothing, from whence he was drawn; but he ceased to be morally good, being stript of his Righteousness by his Apostasie; as a Creature he was Gods Work, as a Creature he remains still Gods Work, and therefore as a Creature remains still good, in regard of his created Being. The more of Being any thing hath, the more of this sort of natural goodness it hath; and so the Devil hath more of this natural goodness than Men have; because he hath more marks of the Excellency of God upon him, in regard of the greatness of his knowledge, and the extent of his power, the largeness of his capacity, and the acuteness of his understanding, which are natural perfections belonging to the nature of an Angel; though he hath lost his moral perfections. God is *Sovereignly, and infinitely Good in this sort of Goodness.* He is unsearchably perfect,\* nothing is wanting to his Essence, that is necessary to the Perfection of it; yet this is not that which the Scripture expresseth under the term of Goodness, but a Perfection of Gods Nature as related to us, and which he poureth forth upon all his Creatures, as Goodness which flows from this Natural Perfection of the Deity.

\* Job 11. 7.

2. *Nor*



2. *Nor is it the same with the Blessedness of God, but something flowing from his Blessedness.* VVere he not first infinitely Blessed, and Full in Himself, he could not be infinitely Good and Diffusive to us; had he not an infinite abundance in his own Nature, he could not be overflowing to his Creatures.

Had not the Sun a fulness of Light in it self, and the Sea a vastness of VVater, the one could not enrich the VVorld with its Beams, nor the other fill every Creek with its VVaters.

3. *Nor is it the same with the Holiness of God.* The Holiness of God is the rectitude of his Nature, whereby he is Pure, and without Spot in himself. The Goodness of God is the efflux of his VVill, whereby he is beneficial to his Creatures. The Holiness of God is manifest in his rational Creatures; but the Goodness of God extends to all the VVorks of his Hands. His Holiness beams most in his Law, his Goodness reacheth to every thing that had a Being from him\*. *The Lord is Good to all.* And though he be said in the same Psalm, v. 17. to be *Holy in all his Works*, 'tis to be understood of his Bounty, Bountiful in all his VVorks; The Hebrew word signifying both Holy and Liberal, and the Margent of the Bible reads it *Merciful* or *Bountiful*.

\* Lombard lib.  
4. distinct. 46.  
p. 286.

4. *Nor is this Goodness of God the same with the Mercy of God.* Goodness extends to more Objects than Mercy; Goodness stretcheth it self out to all the VVorks of his Hands; Mercy extends only to a miserable Object; for it is joined with a sentiment of Pity, occasioned by the Calamity of another. The Mercy of God is exercised about those that Merit Punishment; the Goodness of God is exercised upon Objects that have not merited any thing contrary to the acts of his Bounty. Creation is an act of Goodness, not of Mercy; Providence in governing some part of the VVorld, is an act of Goodness, not of Mercy\*. The Heavens, saith *Austin*, need the Goodness of God to govern them, but not the Mercy of God to relieve them; The Earth is full of the Misery of Man, and the Compassions of God; but the Heavens need not the Mercy of God to pity them, because they are not miserable; though they need the Goodness, and Power of God to sustain them; because as Creatures they are impotent without him. Gods Goodness extends to the Angels, that kept their standing, and to Man in Innocence, who in that state stood not in need of Mercy. Goodness and Mercy are distinct, though Mercy be a Branch of Goodness; There may be a manifestation of Goodness, though none of Mercy. Some think Christ had been Incarnate, had not Man fallen: Had it been so, there had been a manifestation of Goodness to our Nature, but not of Mercy; because Sin had not made our Natures miserable. The Devils are Monuments of Gods creating Goodness, but not of his Pardoning Compassions. The Grace of God respects the rational Creature, Mercy the miserable Creature, Goodness all his Creatures, Brutes, and the senseless Plants, as well as reasonable Man.

\* Rom. 5. 7.

\* Coccei. sum.  
p. 50.

5. *By Goodness is meant the Bounty of God.* This is the Notion of goodness in the World; when we say a good Man, we mean either a holy Man in his life, or a charitable and liberal Man in the management of his Goods. A righteous Man, and a good Man are distinguished\*. For scarcely for a *righteous Man* will one die; yet for a *good Man* one would even dare to die. For an innocent Man, one as innocent of the Crime as Himself would scarce venture his Life; but for a good Man, a liberal tender-hearted Man, that had been a common Good in the place where he lived, or had done another as great a benefit as life it self amounts to, a Man out of gratitude might dare to die. *The Goodness of God is his inclination to deal well and bountifully with his Creatures* \*. 'Tis that whereby he wills, there should be something besides Himself for his own Glory. God is good in Himself, and to Himself, i. e. highly amiable to Himself; and therefore some define it a Perfection



Perfection of God, whereby he loves himself and his own Excellency; but as it stands in Relation to his Creatures, 'tis that Perfection of God, whereby he delights in his Works, and is beneficial to them. God is the *highest Goodness*, because he doth not act for his own profit, but for his Creatures welfare, and the manifestation of his own Goodness. He sends out his Beams, without receiving any addition to himself, or substantial advantage from his Creatures. 'Tis from this Perfection that he loves whatsoever is good, and that is, whatsoever he hath made, *For every Creature of God is good* \*; Every Creature hath some Communications from him, which cannot be without some Affection to them; Every Creature hath a Footstep of *Divine Goodness* upon it; God therefore loves that goodness in the Creature, else he would not love himself. † God hates no Creature, no not the Devils, and Damn'd, as Creatures; he is not an Enemy to them, as they are the Works of his Hands: He is properly an Enemy, that doth simply and absolutely wish Evil to another; but God doth not absolutely wish Evil to the Damned; that Justice that he inflicts upon them, the deserved Punishment of their Sin, is part of his Goodness, (as shall afterward be shewn.)

\* 1 Tim. 4. 4.

† Cajetan in  
Secund' secundæ  
Qu. 34. Ar. 2.

This is the most pleasant Perfection of the Divine Nature; His Creating Power amazes us, His Conducting Wisdom astonisheth us, His Goodness, as furnishing us with all Conveniencies, delights us, and renders both his amazing Power, and astonishing Wisdom delightful to us.

As the Sun by effecting things, is an Emblem of Gods Power, by discovering things to us, is an Emblem of his Wisdom, but by refreshing and comforting us, is an Emblem of his Goodness; And without this refreshing Vertue it communicates to us, we should take no pleasure in the Creatures it produceth, nor in the Beauties it discovers. As God is Great and Powerful, he is the Object of our Understanding; but as Good and Bountiful, he is the Object of our Love and Desire.

6. *The Goodness of God comprehends all his Attributes.* All the Acts of God are nothing else but the Effluxes of his Goodness, distinguish'd by several names, according to the Objects it is exercis'd about. As the Sea, though it be one Mass of Water, yet we distinguish it by several names, according to the Shores it washeth, and beats upon, as the *Brittish* and *German* Ocean, though all be one Sea. When *Moses* long'd to see his Glory, God tells him, he would give him a prospect of his Goodness; † *I will make all my goodness to pass before thee.* His Goodness is his Glory and Godhead, as much as is delightfully visible to his Creatures, and whereby he doth benefit Man; *I will cause my Goodness or Comeliness*, as *Calvin* renders it, to pass before thee; what is this, but the Train of all his lovely Perfections springing from his Goodness? \* The whole Catalogue of *Mercy, Grace, long-suffering, abundance of truth*, summed up in this one word. All are Streams from this Fountain; he could be none of this, were he not first Good. When it confers Happiness without Merit, 'tis Grace; when it bestows Happiness against Merit, 'tis Mercy; when he bears with provoking Rebels, 'tis long-suffering; when he performs his Promise, 'tis Truth; when it meets with a person, to whom it is not oblig'd, 'tis Grace; when he meets with a person in the World, to which he hath obliged himself by Promise, 'tis Truth\*; when it Commiserates a Distressed Person, 'tis Pity; when it supplies an Indigent Person, 'tis Bounty; when it succours an Innocent Person, 'tis Righteousness, and when it pardons a Penitent Person, 'tis Mercy; all summ'd up in this one name of Goodness: And the *Psalmist* expresseth the same Sentiment in the same words: † *They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy: the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* He is first Good, and then Compassionate. Righteousness is often in Scripture taken, not for Justice, but Charitableness: This Attribute, saith one, † is so full of God, that it doth defie all the rest, and verifie the Adorableness of him. His Wisdom might contrive against us, His Power bear too hard upon us; one might be too hard for an Ignorant, and the other too mighty for an Impotent

† Exod. 33. 19.

\* Exod. 34. 6.

\* Herle upon  
Wisdom, cap. 5.  
p. 41. 42.

† Ps. 145. 7, 8.

† Ing: lo Ben-  
ivolio, G  
Uran, Book 4.  
p. 260, 261.

G g g g

Creature;



† Daille Me-  
dang part 2.  
p. 74, 75.

Creature ; His holiness would scare an impure and guilty Creature, but his goodness conducts them all for us, and makes them all amiable to us ; Whatever Comeliness they have in the Eye of a Creature, whatever Comfort they afford to the Heart of a Creature, we are oblig'd for all to his *goodness*. This puts all the rest upon a delightful Exercise, this makes his Wisdom design for us, and this makes his Power to act for us : This Vails his Holiness from affrighting us, and this Spirits his Mercy to relieve us : † All his acts towards Man, are but the Workmanship of this. What moved him at first to Create the World out of nothing, and erect so noble a Creature as Man, endow'd with such excellent gifts ; was it not his *goodness* ? What made him separate his Son to be a Sacrifice for us, after we had endeavour'd to raze out the first marks of his favour ; Was it not a strong bubbling of *goodness* ? What moves him, to reduce a Fallen Creature to the due sense of his Duty, and at last bring him to an Eternal Felicity ; is it not only his *goodness* ? This is the Captain Attribute that leads the rest to act. This attends them, and Spirits them in all his ways of acting. This is the Complement and Perfection of all his Works ; had it not been for this, which set all the rest on work, nothing of his Wonders had been seen in Creation, nothing of his Compassions had been seen in Redemption. The Second thing is some *Propositions to explain the Nature of this Goodness* ;

\* Gen. 1. 31.

\* Luc. 11. 13.  
30.

1. *He is good by his own Essence.* God is not only good in his Essence, but good by his Essence : The Essence of every created thing is good, so the unerring God pronounced every thing which he had made \*. The Essence of the worst Creatures, yea, of the impure and Savage Devils is good, but they are not good *per se* *essentiam*, for then they could not be bad, Malicious, and Oppressive. God is good as he is God, and therefore good by himself, and from himself, not by participation from another ; He made every thing good, but none made him good : Since his goodness was not received from another, he is good by his *own Nature*. He could not receive it from the things he Created, they are later than he : Since they received all from him, they could bestow nothing on him, and no God preceded him, in whose Inheritance and Treasures of Goodness, he could be a Successor : He is absolutely his *own goodness*, he needed none to make him good ; but all things needed him, to be good by him. Creatures are good by being made so by him, and cleaving to him : He is good without cleaving to any goodness without him. Goodness is not a Quality in him, but a Nature, \* not a Habit added to his Essence, but his Essence it self ; He is not first God, and then afterwards Good, but he is Good as he is God, his Essence being one and the same, is formally and equally God and Good. *ἑαυτοῦ καλῶς*, *good of himself*, was one of the Names the *Platonists* gave him. He is Essentially Good in his own Nature, and not by any outward action which follows his Essence. He is an Independent Being, and hath nothing of goodness or happiness from any thing without him, or any thing he doth act about. If he were not good by his Essence, he could not be Eternally good, he could not be the *first good*, he would have something before him, from whence he derived that Goodness, wherewith he is possessed ; Nor could he be perfectly good, for he could not be equally good to that, from whom he derived his Goodness : No Star, no splendid Body that derives light from the Sun, doth equal that Sun by which it's enlightned.

Hence his goodness must be infinite, and circumscrib'd by no limits : The Exercise of his goodness may be limited by himself, but his Goodness, the Principle, cannot ; For since his Essence is Infinite, and his Goodness is not distinguished from his Essence, 'tis Infinite also ; If it were limited, it were Finite ; he cannot be bounded by any thing without him ; if so, then he were not God, because he would have something Superior to him, to put bars in his way ; If there were any thing to fix him, it must be a good or evil Being ; Good it cannot be, for it is the property of goodness to encourage goodness, not to bound it ; Evil it cannot be, for then it would extinguish goodness, as well as limit it ; it would not be content with the circumscribing it, without destroying it ; for it is the nature of every Contrary, to endeavour the destruction of its Opposite.



Opposite. He is Essentially good by his own Essence, therefore good of himself, therefore Eternally good, and therefore abundantly good.

2. *God is the prime and chief Goodness.* Being good *per se*, and by his own Essence, he must needs be the *chief Goodness*, in whom there can be nothing but good, from whom there can proceed nothing but good, to whom all good whatsoever must be referr'd as the final cause of all good. As he is the chief Being, so he is the chief Good. And as we rise by steps from the Existence of Created things, to acknowledge one Supream Being, which is God; so we mount by Steps from the Consideration of the Goodness of Created things, to acknowledge one Infinite Ocean of Sovereign Goodness, whence the Streams of Created Goodness are deriv'd. When we behold things that partake of Goodness from another, we must acquiesce in one that hath Goodness by participation from no other, but Originally from himself, and therefore Supreamly in himself above all other things. So that as nothing greater and more Majestick can be imagin'd, so also nothing Better and more Excellent can be conceiv'd than God. Nothing can add to him, or make him better than he is, nothing can detract from him, to make him worse, nothing can be added to him, nothing can be sever'd from him; No Created Good can render him more Excellent; No Evil from any Creature, can render him less Excellent. † Our *goodness extends not to him; Wickedness may hurt a Man*, as we are, and our *Righteousness may profit the Son of Man*, but if we be *Righteous*, what give we to him, or what receives he at our hands? \* As he hath no Superior in place above him, so being chief of all, he cannot be made better by any Inferior to him. How can he be made better by any, that hath from himself, all that he hath? The Goodness of a Creature may be chang'd, but the Goodness of the Creator is immutable; He is always like himself, so Good that he cannot be Evil, as he is so Blessed, that he cannot be Miserable.

† Psal. 16. 2.

\* Job 35. 7, 8.

† Psal. 73. 25.

\* Matth. 4. 4.

Nothing is good but God, because nothing is of it self but God: As all things being from nothing, are nothing in comparison of God, so all things being from nothing, are scanty and evil in comparison of God. If any thing had been *ex Deo*, God being the Matter of it, it had been as good as God is; but since the Principle whence all things were drawn, was nothing, though the Efficient Cause by which they were extracted from nothing was God, they are as nothing in goodness, and not esteemable in comparison of God. † *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, &c.* God is all good, every Creature hath a distinct variety of goodness. God distinctly pronounced every days work in the Creation good. Food communicates the goodness of its Nourishing Virtue to our Bodies, Flowers the goodness of their Odors to our Smell, every Creature a goodness of Comeliness to our Sight; Plants the goodness of Healing Qualities for our Cure. And all derive from themselves a goodness of Knowledge, objectively to our Understandings. The Sun by one sort of goodness warms us, Metals enrich us, living Creatures sustain us, and delight us by another; All those have distinct kinds of Goodness, which are eminently summed up in God, and are all but parts of his Immense Goodness. 'Tis he that enlightens us by his Sun, nourisheth us by Bread. \* 'Tis not by Bread alone, that we live, but by the Word of God. 'Tis all but his own Supream Goodness, conveyed to us through those varieties of Conduit-pipes. *God is all Good*, other things are good in their kind, as a Good Man, a Good Angel, a Good Tree, a Good Plant; but God hath a Good of all kinds eminently in his Nature. He is no less All-good, than he is Almighty, and All-knowing: As the Sun contains in it all the Light, and more Light than is in all the clearest Bodies in the World; so doth God contain in himself all the Good, and more Good than is in the Richest Creatures. Nothing is Good, but as it Resembles him; as nothing is Hot, but as it Resembles Fire, the Prime Subject of Heat.

God is Omnipotent, therefore no Good can be wanting to him. If he were destitute of any which he could not have, he were not Almighty: He is so Good that there is no mixture of any thing, which can be call'd not Good in him; every thing besides him wants some Good, which others have. Nothing can be so



Evil as God is Good. There can be no Evil, but there is some mixture of Good with it. No Nature so Evil, but there is some spark of Goodness in it: But God is a Good which hath no taint of Evil; nothing can be so Supreme an Evil, as God is Supreme Goodness.

He is only Good without capacity of increase: He is all Good, and unmixedly Good; none Good but God. A Goodness like the Sun, that hath all Light, and no Darkness. That is the second thing, He is the Supreme and chief Goodness.

3. *This Goodness is Communicative.* None so Communicatively Good as God. As the Notion of God includes Goodness, so the Notion of Goodness includes Diffusiveness; without Goodness he would cease to be a Deity, and without Diffusiveness he would cease to be Good. The being Good is necessary to the being God: For Goodness is nothing else in the Notion of it, but a strong inclination to do Good; either to find, or make an Object, wherein to exercise it self, according to the Propension of its own Nature; And it is an Inclination of Communicating it self, not for its own interest, but the good of the Object it pitcheth upon. Thus God is good by Nature, and his Nature is not without activity, he acts conveniently to his own Nature. † *Thou art good, and doest good.* And nothing accrues to him, by the Communications of himself to others, since his blessedness was as great before the frame of any Creature, as ever it was since the Erecting of the World; so that the Goodness of Christ himself encreaseth not the lustre of his Happiness: † *My Goodness extends not to thee.* He is not of a Niggardly and Envious Nature; He is too Rich to have any cause to envy, and too Good to have any will to envy; He is as liberal as he is Rich, according to the capacity of the Object about which his Goodness is exercised. The Divine Goodness being the Supreme Goodness, is Goodness in the highest Degree of Activity; Not an idle, enclosed, pent up Goodness, as a Spring shut up, or a Fountain sealed, bubbling up within it self, but bubbling out of it self. A Fountain of Gardens to water every part of his Creation; *He is an Ointment pour'd forth:* † Nothing spreads it self more than Oyl, and takes up a larger space, wheresoever it drops. It may be no less said of the Goodness of God, as it is of the fulness of Christ, † *He fills all in all:* He fills Rational Creatures with Understanding, Sensitive Nature with Vigor and Motion, the whole World with Beauty and Sweetness. Every Taste, every Touch of a Creature is a Taste and Touch of Divine Goodness. Divine Goodness offers it self in one spark in this Creature, in another spark in the other Creature, and altogether make up a Goodness inconceivable by any Creature. The whole Mass and extracted Spirit of it is infinitely short of the Goodness of the Divine Nature, imperfect shadows of that Goodness which is in himself.

Indeed the more excellent any thing is, the more nobly it acts; How remotely doth Light, that excellent brightness of the Creation, disperse it self? How doth that glorious Creature, which God hath set in the Heavens, spread its Wings over Heaven and Earth, roul it self about the World, cast its Beams upward and downward, insinuate into all Corners, pierce the Depths, and shoot up its Rays into the Heights, encircle the higher and lower Creatures in its Arms, reach out its Communications to influence every thing under the Earth, as well as dart its Beams of light and heat on things above, or upon the Earth? *Nothing is hid from it;* † not from its power, nor from its sweetness. How Communicative also is Water, a necessary and excellent Creature? How active is it in a River, to nourish the living Creatures engendred in its Womb? Refresheth every Shore it runs by, promotes the propagation of Fruits for the Nourishment, and bestows a Verdure upon the Ground for the delight of Man; and where it cannot reach the higher Ground in its Substance, it doth by its Vapours mounted up, and concocted by the Sun, and gently distilled upon the Earth, for the opening its Womb to bring forth its Fruits. † God is more prone to communicate himself, than the Sun to spread its Wings, or the Earth to mount up its Fruits, or the Water to multiply living Creatures. *Goodness is his Nature.* Hence were there internal Communications of himself from Eternity;

† Ps. 119. 68.

† Psal. 16. 2.

† Cant. 1. 9.

† Eph. 1. 23.

† Psal. 19. 6.

† Gen. 2. 9.



ternity ; Diffusions of himself without himself in time, in the Creation of the World, like a full Vessel running over. He Created the World that he might impart his Goodness to something without him, and diffuse larger measures of his Goodness, after he had laid the first Foundation of it in its Being ; And therefore he Created several sorts of Creatures, that they might be capable of various, and distinct measures of his Liberality, according to the distinct capacities of their Nature ; but imparted most to the Rational Creature, because that is only capable of an Understanding to know him, and Will to embrace him. He is the highest Goodness, and therefore a Communicative Goodness, and acts excellently according to his Nature.

4. *God is necessarily good.* None is necessarily Good but God ; he is as necessarily Good, as he is necessarily God. His Goodness is as inseparable from his Nature as his Holiness. He is Good by Nature, not only by will ; as he is Holy by Nature, not only by will ; he is Good in his Nature, and Good in his Actions ; and as he cannot be bad in his Nature, so he cannot be bad in his Communications : He can no more act contrary to this Goodness in any of his actions, than he can un-God himself. 'Tis not necessary that God should Create a World ; he was at his own choice whether he would Create or no : But when he resolves to make a World, 'tis necessary that he should make it good, because he is Goodness it self, and cannot act against his own Nature. He could not Create any thing without Goodness in the very act : The very act of Creation, or Communicating being to any thing without himself, is in it self an act of Goodness, as well as an act of Power : Had he not been Good in himself, nothing could have been endued with any Goodness by him. In the act of giving Being, he is Liberal, the Being he bestows is a Displaying his own Liberality : He could not confer what he needs not, and which could not be deserved, without being Pountiful. Since what was nothing, could not Merit to be brought into Being, the very act of giving to nothing a Being, was an act of choice Goodness.

He could not Create any thing without Goodness as the Motive, and the necessary Motive : His Goodness could not necessitate him to make the World, but his Goodness could only move him to resolve to make a World ; He was not bound to erect and fashion it because of his Goodness, but he could not frame it without his Goodness as the moving cause.

He could not Create any thing, but he must Create it Good. It had been inconsistent with the Supream Goodness of his Nature, to have Created only Murderous, Ravenous, Injurious Creatures : To have Created a Bedlam rather than a World. A meer heap of Confusion would have been as inconsistent with his Divine Goodness, as with his Divine Wisdom.

Again when his Goodness had moved him to make a Creature, his Goodness would necessarily move him to be beneficial to his Creature ; not that this necessity results from any Merit in the Creature, which he had framed ; but from the Excellency and Diffusiveness of his own Nature, and his own Glory, the end for which he form'd it, which would have been obscure, yea, nothing, without some degrees of his Bounty. What occasion of acknowledgments and praise could the Creature have for its Being, if God had given him only a miserable Being, while it was innocent in action ? The Goodness of God would not suffer him to make a Creature, without providing conveniencies for it, so long as he thought good to maintain its Being, and furnishing it with that which was necessary to answer that End for which he Created it ; And his own Nature would not suffer him to be unkind to his Rational Creature, while it was Innocent. It had been injustice to inflict Evil upon the Creature, that had not offended, and had no relation to an offending Creature ; The Nature of God could not have brought forth such an act. † And therefore some say, that God after he had Created Man, could not presently annihilate him, and take away his Life and Being. As a Sovereign he might do it, as Almighty he was able to do it, as well as Create him ; but in regard of his Goodness, he could not Morally do it : For had he annihilated Man as soon as ever he had made him, he had not made Man for himself, and for his own Glory ; to be loved, worshipped, sought, and acknowledged by him : He would not then have

† Cocceii  
Sum. Theolog.  
p. 91.



\* Isa. 45. 18,  
19.

have been the end of Man; He had Created him in vain, and the VWorld in vain, which he assures us he did not \*. And certainly if the Gifts of God be without Repentance, Man could not have been annihilated after his Creation without Repentance in God, without any Cause, had not Sin entered into the World. If God did not say to Man, after Sin had made its entrance into the World, *seek ye me in vain*, he could not because of his Goodness, have said so to Man in his Innocence. As God is necessarily Mind, so he is necessarily Will; as he is necessarily Knowing, so he is necessarily Loving. He could not be Blessed, if he did not know Himself, and his own Perfection: Nor Good, if he did not delight in Himself, and his own Perfections. And this Goodness whereby he delights in Himself, is the source of his delight in his Creatures, wherein he sees the footsteps of Himself. If he loves Himself, he cannot but love the Resemblance of Himself, and the Image of his own Goodness. He loves himself, because he is the highest Goodness, and Excellency; and loves every thing as it resembles Himself; because it is an efflux of his own Goodness: And as he doth necessarily love Himself, and his own Excellency, so he doth necessarily love any thing, that resembles that Excellency, which is the Primary Object of his Esteem. But,

\* Gilbert de  
Dei Dominio,  
p. 6.

5. Though he be necessarily Good, yet *he is also freely Good*. The necessity of the Goodness of his Nature hinders not the liberty of his Actions: The matter of his acting is not at all necessary, but the manner of his acting in a good and bountiful way, is necessary, as well as free \*. He Created the World and Man freely, because he might choose whether he would Create it, but he Created them good necessarily, because he was first necessarily good in his Nature, before he was freely a Creator. When he Created Man, he freely gave him a positive Law, but necessarily a Wise and Righteous Law; because he was necessarily Wise, and Righteous, before he was freely a Lawgiver. When he makes a Promise, he freely lets the Word go out of his Lips, but when he hath made it, he is necessarily a faithful Performer; because he was necessarily True and Righteous in his Nature, before he was freely a Promiser. God is necessarily good in his Nature, but free in his Communications of it: To make him necessarily to communicate his Goodness in the first Creation of the Creature, would render him but impotent, good without liberty, and without will: If the Communications of it be not free, the Eternity of the VWorld must necessarily be concluded, which some Anciently asserted from the Naturalness of Gods Goodness, making the VWorld flow from God as Light from the Sun.

† Job 33. 13.

\* Rom. 9. 15.

God indeed is necessarily good *Affectivè* in regard of his Nature, but freely good *Effectivè* in regard of the Effluxes of it to this or that particular Subject he pitcheth on. He is not so necessarily communicative of his Goodness as the Sun of his light, or a Tree of its cooling shade, that chooseth not its Objects, but enlightens all indifferently, without any variation or distinction: This were to make God of no more Understanding than the Sun, to shine not where it pleaseth, but where it must. He is an understanding Agent, and hath a Sovereign Right to choose his own Subjects. It would not be a Supreme Goodness, if it were not a voluntary Goodness. 'Tis agreeable to the Nature of the highest Good, to be absolutely free, to dispence his Goodness in what methods, and measures he pleaseth, according to the free determinations of his own VWill, guided by the VWisdom of his Mind, and regulated by the Holiness of his Nature. He is not to give an account of any of his matters †. He will have mercy, on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion \*. And he will be good, to whom he will be good: When he doth act, he cannot but act well, so it's necessary; yet he may act this good, or that good to this or that degree, so it is free. As it is the Perfection of his Nature, 'tis necessary; as it is the communication of his Bounty, 'tis voluntary. The Eye cannot but see if it be open, yet it may glance upon this or that colour, fix upon this or that object, as it is conducted by the VWill. God necessarily loves Himself, because he is good, yet not by constraint, but freedom; because his affection to Himself is from a knowledge of Himself: He necessarily loves his own Image; because 'tis his Image, yet freely, because not blindly, but



but from motions of understanding and will. What necessity could there be upon him, to resolve to communicate his Goodness? It could not be to make Himself better by it; for he had a Goodness incapable of any addition: He confers a goodness on his Creatures, but reaps not a Harvest of goodness to his own Essence from his Creatures. What obligation could there be from the Creature, to confer a goodness on Him to this or that degree, for this or that duration? If he had not Created a Man, nor Angel, he had done them no wrong. If he had given them only a simple Being, he had manifested a part of his Goodness, without giving them a right to challenge any more of him. If he had taken away their Beings after a time when he had answered his End, he had done them no Injury: For what Law oblig'd him, to enrich them, and leave them in that Being wherein he had invested them, but his sole Goodness? Whatever sparks of goodness, any Creature hath, are the free effusions of Gods Bounty, the Offspring of his Own inclination to do well, the Simple favor of the Donor; not purchased, not merited by the Creature. God is as unconstrained in his Liberty in all his Communications, as infinite in his Goodness, the Fountain of them.

6. *This Goodness is Communicative with the greatest Pleasure.* Moses desired to see his Glory, God assures him, he should see his Goodness†, intimating that his Goodness is his Glory, and his Glory his delight also. He sends not forth his Blessings with an ill Will; He doth not stay till they are squeezed from him; He prevents Men with his Blessings of Goodness\*; He is most delighted, when he is most diffusive, and his pleasure in bestowing, is larger than his Creatures in possessing; He is not covetous of his own Treasures; He lays up his Goodness in order to laying it out with a complacency wholly Divine. The jealousy Princes have of their Subjects, makes them sparing of their Gifts, for fear of giving them Materials for Rebellion. Gods foresight of the ill use Men would make of his Benefits, damp't him not in bestowing his Largesses. He is incapable of Envy: His own Happiness can no more be diminished, than it can be increased. None can over-top him in Goodness, because nothing hath any Good, but what is derived from him; his Gifts are without Repentance: Sorrow hath no footing in him, who is infinitely Happy, as well as infinitely Good. Goodness and Envy are inconsistent. How unjustly then did the Devil accuse God? What God gives out of Goodness, he gives with joy and gladness. He did not only will that we should be, but rejoice, that he had brought us into Being. He rejoiced in his Works†. And his Wisdom stood by him, delighting in the habitable parts of the Earth\*. He beheld the World after its Creation with a complacency, and still governs it with the same pleasure wherewith he reviewed it. Infinite Chearfulness attends infinite Goodness. He would not give, if he had not a pleasure that others should enjoy his Goodness; Since he is better than any thing, and more communicative than any thing; He is more joyful in giving out, than the Sun can be to run its Race, in pouring forth Light. He is laid only to repent, and grieve, when Men answer not the obligations and ends of his Goodness; which would be their own Felicity as well as his Glory. Though he doth not force greater degrees of his Goodness upon those that neglect it, yet he denies them not to those that solicit him for it. 'Tis always greater pleasure to him to impart upon the importunities of the Creatures, than it is to a Mother to reach out her Breast to her crying and longing Infant. He is not wearied by the solicitations of Men, he is pleased with their Prayers; because he is pleased with the imparting of his own Goodness. He seems to be in travel with it, longing to be delivered of it into the lap of his Creature. He is as much delighted with Petitions for his Liberality in bestowing his best Goodness, as Princes are weary of the craving of their Subjects. None can be so desirous to squeeze those that are under them, as God is delighted to enlarge his hand towards them. 'Tis the nature of his Goodness to be glad of Mens solicitations for it: because they are significant valuations of it, and therefore fit occasions for him to bestow it. Since he doth not delight in the unhappiness of any of his Creatures, he certainly de-

lights

† Exod. 33. 18.  
19.

\* Psal. 113.

† Psal. 104.  
31.  
\* Prov. 8. 31.



lights in what may conduce unto their felicity. He doth with the same delight multiply the effects of his Goodness, where his Wisdom sees it convenient, as he beheld the first Fruits of his Goodness with a complacency upon the laying the top-stone of the Creation.

\* *Amoral Moral*  
\* *Tom. 1.*  
p. 260.

7. *The displaying of this Goodness was the Motive and End of all his Works of Creation and Providence* \*. God being infinitely Wise, could not act without the highest Reason, and for the highest End: The reason that induced him to Create, must be of as great an Eminency as Himself: The Motive could not be taken from without him; because there was nothing but Himself in Being: It must be taken therefore from within Himself, and from some one of those most Excellent Perfections, whereby we conceive him. But upon the exact consideration of all of them, none can seem to challenge that Honour of being the Motive of them, to resolve the setting forth any work, but his own Goodness; This being the first thing manifest in his Creation, seems to be the first thing moving him to a Resolution to Create; Wisdom may be considered as directing; Power considered as Acting; but it is natural to reflect upon Goodness as Moving the one to direct, and the other to act: Power was the Principle of his Action, Wisdom the Rule of his Action, Goodness the Motive of his Action; Principle and Rule are awakened by the Motive, and subservient to the End. That which is the most amiable Perfection in the Divine Nature, and that which he first took notice of as the Footsteps of them in the distinct view of every days work, and the general view of the whole Frame, seems to claim the best right to be entitled the Motive and End of his Creation of things.

† Prov. 15. 4.

\* Deut. 10. 13.

God could have no End but himself, because there was nothing besides himself. Again, the End of every Agent is that which he esteems good, and the best good for that kind of action. Since nothing is to be esteemed good but God, nothing can be the ultimate End of God but himself, and his own Goodness: What a Man wills chiefly is his End; but God cannot will any other thing but himself as his End, because there is nothing Superior to himself in Goodness. He cannot will any thing, that Supremely serves himself and his own Goodness as his End: for if he did, that which he wills, must be Superior to himself in Goodness, and then he is not God; or Inferior to them in Goodness, and then he would not be Righteous, in willing that which is a lower Good before a higher. God cannot will any thing as his End of acting but himself, without underlaying himself. Gods Will being Infinitely Good, cannot move for any thing but what is Infinitely Good; and therefore whatsoever God made, he made for himself, † that whatsoever he made might bear a badge of this Perfection upon it, and be a discovery of his wonderful Goodness; For the making things for himself doth not signify any indigence in God, that he made any thing to encrease his Excellency (for that is capable of no addition) but to manifest his Excellency. God possessing every thing eminently in himself, did not Create the World for any need he had of it; Finite things were unable to make any accession to that which is Infinite. Man indeed builds a House to be a shelter to him against Wind and Weather, and makes Clothes to secure him from Cold, and Plants Gardens for his Recreation and Health. God is above all those little helps: he did not make the World for himself in such a kind, but for himself, i. e. the manifestation of himself and the Riches of his Nature: Not to make himself Blessed, but to discover his own Blessedness to his Creatures, and communicate something of it to them. He did not garnish the World with so much Bounty, that he might live more happily than he did before; but that his Rational Creatures might have fit conveniencies. As the end for which God demands the performance of our Duty, is not for his own advantage, but for our good; \* so the end why he conferr'd upon us the excellency of such a Being, was for our good, and the discovery of his Goodness to us: For had not God Created the World, he had been wholly unknown to any but himself; He produced Creatures that he might be known. As the Sun shines not only to discover other things, but to be seen it self in its beauty and



and brightness. God would Create things, because he would be known in his Glory and Liberality; Hence is it that he Created Intellectual Creatures, because without them, the rest of the Creation could not be taken notice of: It had been in some sort in vain; for no Nature lower than an Understanding Nature, was able to know the Marks of God in the Creation, and acknowledge him as God. In this regard, God is good above all Creatures, because he intends only to communicate his Goodness in Creation, not to acquire any Goodness, or Excellency from them, as Men do in their framing of things. God is all, and is destitute of nothing, and therefore nothing accrues to him by the Creation, but the acknowledgment of his Goodness. This Goodness therefore must be the Motive and End of all his Works.

The third thing, *That God is good.*

1. *The more excellent any thing is in Nature, the more of goodness and kindness it hath.* For we see more of love and kindness in Creatures that are endued with Sense, to their Descendants, than in Plants, that have only a Principle of Growth. Plants preserve their Seeds whole that are enclosed in them; Animals look to their young only after they are dropt from them; yet after some time take no more notice of them than of a Stranger that never had any Birth from them. But Man, that hath a higher Principle of Reason, cherisheth his Offspring, and gives them Marks of his goodness while he lives, and leaves not the World at the time of his Death without some testimonies of it; Much more must God, who is a higher Principle than Sense or Reason, be good and bountiful to all his Offspring. The more perfect any thing is, the more it doth communicate it self. The Sun is more excellent than the Stars, and therefore doth more sensibly, more extensively disperse its liberal Beams than the Stars do. And the better any Man is, the more charitable he is. God being the most excellent Nature, having nothing more excellent than himself, because nothing more ancient than himself, who is the ancient of days; There is nothing therefore better and more bountiful than himself.

2. *He is the cause of all Created Goodness, he must therefore himself be the Supreme Good.* What Good is in the Heavens, is the Product of some Being above the Earth; and those varieties of Goodness in the Earth, and several Creatures, are some where in their fulness and union: That therefore which possesses all those scattered Goodnesses in their fulness, must be all Good, All that Good which is display'd in Creatures; therefore Sovereignly best. Whatsoever Natural or Moral Goodness there is in the World, in Angels, or Men, or Inferiour Creatures, is a line drawn from that Center, the bubblings of that Fountain. God cannot but be better than all, since the Goodness that is in Creatures is the fruit of his own. If he were not good, he could produce no good: he could not bestow what he had not. If the Creature be good, as the *Apostle* says, *every Creature is*\*, he must needs be better than all, because they have nothing but what is derived to them from him; And much more goodness than all, because Finite Beings are not capable of receiving into them, and containing in themselves all that goodness which is in an Infinite Being; When we search for good in Creatures, they come short of that satisfaction which is in God. † As the certainty of a first Principle of all things, is necessarily concluded from the being of Creatures, and the upholding and sustaining Power and Virtue of God is concluded from the mutability of those things in the World; whence we infer, that there must be some Stable Foundation of those tottering things, some firm Hinge upon which those changeable things do move, without which there would be no Stability in the Kinds of things, no order, no agreement, or union among them: So from the goodness of every thing, and their usefulness to us, we must conclude him Good, who made all those things. And since we find distinct Goodnesses in the Creature, we must conclude that one Principle whence they did flow, excels in the Glory of Goodness: All those little glimmerings

\* 1 Tim. 4. 4.

† Psal. 4. 6.

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of



of Goodness which are scattered in the Creatures, as the Image in the Glass, Represent the Face, Posture, Motion of him whose Image it is, but not in the fulness of Life and Spirit, as in the Original; 'Tis but a Shadow at the best, and speaks something more excellent in the Copy. As God hath an Infiniteness of Being above them, so he hath a *Supremacy of Goodness* beyond them: What they have, is but a Participation from him; what he hath, must be infinitely super-eminent above them. If any thing be good by it self, it must be Infinitely Good, it would set it self no bounds; we must make as many Gods, as particulars of Goodness in the World: But being Good by the bounty of another, that from whence they flow must be the chief Goodness. \* 'Tis Gods Excellency and Goodness, which like a Beam pierceth all things: He decks Spirits with Reason, endues Matter with Form, furnisheth every thing with useful Qualities.

\* *El. i. in*  
*Gen. Amor.*  
*11. 2. cap.*  
*p. 1316.*

As one Beam of the Sun illustrates Fire, Water, Earth; so one Beam of God enlightens and endows Minds, Souls, and Universal Nature: Nothing in the World had its goodness from it self, any more than it had its being from it self. The Cause must be richer than the Effect.

But that which I intend is the *Defence of this Goodness*.

1. *The goodness of God is not impair'd by suffering Sin to enter into the World, and Man to fall thereby.* 'Tis rather a Testimony of Gods Goodness, that he gave Man an ability to be Happy, than any Charge against his Goodness, that he setled Man in a capacity to be Evil. God was first a Benefactor to Man, before Man could be a Rebel against God. May it not be enquired, whether it had not been against the Wisdom of God, to have made a Rational Creature with Liberty, and not suffer him to act according to the Nature he was endowed with, and to follow his own choice for some time? Had it been Wisdom to frame a Free Creature, and totally to restrain that Creature from following its Liberty? Had it been Goodness, as it were, to force the Creature to be happy against its will? Gods Goodness furnisht *Adam* with a power to stand; was it contrary to his Goodness, to leave *Adam* to a free use of that Power? To make a Creature, and not let that Creature act according to the freedom of his Nature, might have been thought to have been a blot upon his Wisdom, and a constraint upon the Creature, not to make use of that freedom of his Nature, which the Divine Goodness had bestowed upon him. To what purpose did God make a Law, to govern his Rational Creature, and yet resolve that Creature should not have his choice, whether he would obey it or no? Had he been really constrained to observe it, his Observation of it could no more have been call'd Obedience, than the acts of Brutes that have a kind of Natural constraint upon them by the instinct of their Nature, can be called Obedience: In vain had God endow'd a Creature with so great and noble a Principle as Liberty. Had it been Goodness in God after he had made a Reasonable Creature, to govern him in the same manner as he did Brutes by a necessary Instinct? It was the Goodness of God to the Nature of Men and Angels, to leave them in such a condition, to be able to give him a voluntary Obedience, a nobler Offering than the whole Creation could present him with; And shall this Goodness be undervalued, and accounted mean, because Man made an ill use of it, and turn'd it into wantonness? As the unbelief of Man doth not diminish the Redeeming Grace of God, † so neither doth the fall of Man lessen the Creating Goodness of God. Besides, why should the permission of Sin be thought more a blemish to his Goodness, than the providing a way of Redemption for the destroying the works of Sin, and the Devil be judged the Glory of it, whereby he discover'd a goodness of Grace that surpass the bounds of Nature? If this were a thing that might seem to obscure, or deface the Goodness of God, in the permission of the fall of *Angels* and *Adam*, it was in order to bring forth a greater Goodness in a more illustrious pomp to the view of the World: \* *God hath concluded them all in Unbelief, that he might have Mercy*

† Rom. 3. 3.

\* Rom. 11. 32.

upon



upon all. But if nothing could be alledged for the defence of his Goodness in this, it were most comely for an ignorant Creature, not to Impeach his Goodness, but adore him in his proceedings, in the same language the *Apostle* doth, *vers. 33. Oh the depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out?*

2. Nor is his Goodness prejudic'd, by not making all things the equal Subjects of it.

1. 'Tis true all things are not Subjects of an equal Goodness. The Goodness of God is not so illustriously manifested in one thing as another. In the Creation he hath dropt Goodness upon some, in giving them Beings and Sense; and powr'd it upon others, in endowing them with Understanding and Reason. The Sun is full of Light, but it hath a want of Sense; Brutes excel in the vigor of Sense, but they are destitute of the Light of Reason; Man hath a Mind and Reason conferr'd on him, but he hath neither the acuteness of Mind, nor the quickness of Motion equal with an Angel. In Providence also he doth give abundance: and opens his hand to some, to others he is more sparing; He gives greater gifts of knowledge to some, while he lets others remain in ignorance; He strikes down some, and raiseth others; He afflicts some with a continual Pain, while he blesteth others with an uninterrupted Health; He hath chosen one Nation wherein to set up his Gospel Sun, and leaves another benighted in their own Ignorance. *Known was God in Judæa; they were a peculiar People alone of all the Nations of the Earth\**. He was not equally good to the Angels: He held forth his hand, to support some in their happy Habitation, while he suffered others to sink in irreparable Ruine; and he is not so diffusive here of his Goodness to his own, as he will be in Heaven. Here their Sun is sometimes Clouded, but there all Clouds and Shades will be blown away, and melted into nothing: Instead of Drops here, there will be above Rivers of Life. Is any Creature destitute of the open Marks of his Goodness, though all are not enricht with those signal Characters, which he vouchsafes to others? He that is unerring pronounced *every thing good* distinctly in its Production, and the whole good in its Universal Perfection. † Though he made not all things *equally good*, yet he made nothing evil; And though one Creature in regard of its Nature, may be better than another, yet an Inferior Creature in regard of its usefulness in the order of the Creation, may be better than a Superior. The Earth hath a goodness in bringing forth Fruits, and the Waters in the Sea a goodness in multiplying Food. That any of us have a Being, is goodness; that we have not so healthful a Being as others, is unequal, but not unjust goodness. He is good to all, though not in the same degree. *The whole Earth is full of his Mercy\**. A good Man is good to his Cattle, to his Servants; he makes a Provision for all, but he bestows not those Flouds of Bounty upon them, that he doth upon his Children. As there are *various Gifts*, but *one Spirit* ||; so there are *various Distributions*, but from *one Goodness*; The Drops as well as the fuller Streams, are of the same Fountain, and relish of the Nature of it; And though he do not make all Men partake of the riches of his Grace after the corruption of their Nature, Is his Goodness disgraced hereby? Or doth he merit the Title of Cruelty? Will any diminish the goodness of a Father, for his not setting up his Son after he hath foolishly and wilfully proved Bankrupt; or not rather admire his liberality in giving him so large a Stock to Trade with, when he first set him up in the World?

2. The goodness of God to Creatures, is to be measured by their distinct Usefulness to the Common End. It were better for a Toad or Serpent to be a Man, i. e. better for the Creature it self, if it were advanced to a higher degree of Being, but not better for the Universe: He could have made every Pebble a living Creature, and every living Creature a Rational one: But that he made every thing as we see, it was a goodness to the Creature it self; But that he did not make it of a higher Elevation in Nature, was a part of his

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goodness

\* Deut. 14. 2.

† Gen. 1. 4.  
10. 12. 18.  
21. 25. 31.

\* Psal. 119. 64.

|| 1 Cor. 12. 4.



goodness to the Rational Creature. If all were Rational Creatures, there would have been wanting Creatures of an Inferior Nature for their convenience ; There would have wanted the manifestation of the *variety* and *fullness of his goodness*. Had all things in the World been Rational Creatures, much of that goodness which he hath communicated to Rational Creatures, would not have appear'd : How could Man have shew'd his skill in Taming and Managing Creatures more mighty than himself ? What Materials would there have been to manifest the goodness of God, bestowed upon the Reasonable Creatures for framing Excellent Works, and Inventions ? Much of the Goodness of God had lain wrapt up from Sense and Understanding. All other things partake not of so great a goodness as Man ; yet they are so subservient to that goodness pour'd forth on Man, that little of it could have been seen without them. Consider Man, every Member in his Body hath a goodness in it self ; but a greater goodness as referred to the whole, without which the goodness of the more noble part would not be manifested. The Head is the most excellent Member, and hath greater Impressions of Divine Goodness upon it, in regard that it is the Organ of Understanding : Were every Member of the Body a Head, what a deformed Monster would Man be ? If he were all Head, where would be feet for Motion ? And Arms, for Action ? Man would be fit only for Thought, and not for Exercise. The goodness of God in giving Man so noble a part as the Head, could not be known without a Tongue, whereby to Express the Conception of his Mind ; and without Feet and Hands whereby to act, much of what he conceives, and determines, and execute the resolves of his Will : All those have a goodness in themselves, an honour, a comeliness from the goodness of God, \* but not so great a goodness as the nobler part : Yet if you consider them in their Functions, and refer them to that excellent Member which they serve, their Inferior goodness is absolutely necessary to the goodness of the other ; without which the goodness of the Head and Understanding would lie in obscurity, be insignificant to the whole World, and in a great measure to the Person himself that wants such Members.

\* 1 Cor. 12.  
12, 13.

3. *The goodness of God is more seen in this inequality.* If God were equally good to all, it would destroy Commerce, Unity, the Links of Humane Society ; damp Charity, and render that useless which is one of the noblest and delightfulest Duties to be exercised here ; It would cool Prayer, which is excited by wants, and is a necessary demonstration of the Creatures dependance on God. But in this inequality, every Man hath enough in his Enjoyments for Praise, and in his Wants matter for his Prayer. Besides the inequality of the Creature is the Ornament of the World : What pleasure could a Garden afford, if there were but one sort of Flowers, or one sort of Plants ? Far less than when there is variety to please the Sight, and every other Sense.

Again, the freedom of Divine Goodness, which is the glory of it, is evident hereby ; Had he been alike good to all, it would have lookt like a necessary, not a free act : But by the inequality, it is manifest that he doth not do it by a Natural necessity as the Sun shines, but by a voluntary Liberty, as being the entire Lord, and free Disposer of his own Goods : And that it is the gift of the pleasure of his Will, as well as the Efflux of his Nature ; That he hath not a Goodness without Wisdom, but a Wisdom as rich as his Bounty.

4. *The goodness of God could not be equally communicated to all, after their settlement in their several Beings.* Because they have not a capacity in their Natures for it : He doth bestow the Marks of his Goodness according to that natural capacity of fitness, he perceives in his Creatures : As the Water of the Sea fills every Creek and Gulf with different measures, according to the compass each have to contain it ; And as the Sun doth disperse Light to the Stars above, and the places below, to some more, to some less, according to the measures of their Reception. God doth not do good to all Creatures according



according to the greatness of his own Power, and the extent of his own Wealth, but according to the capacity of the Subject ; Not so much good as he can do, but so much good as the Creature can receive. The Creature would sink, if God would pour out all his Goodness upon it : As *Moses* would have perished, if God should have shewn him all his Glory \* . He doth manifest more Goodness to his Reasonable Creatures, because they are more capable of acknowledging, and setting forth his Goodness.

\* Exo<sup>l</sup>. 33.  
18, 19.

5. *God ought to be allow'd the free disposal of his own Goodness.* Is not God the Lord of his own Gifts ; and will you not allow him the privilege of having some more peculiar Objects of his love and pleasure, which you allow without blame to Man, and use your self without any sense of a Crime ? Is a Prince esteem'd good, though he be not equally bountiful to all his Servants, nor equally gracious in pardoning all his Rebels ; And shall the goodness of the great Sovereign of the World be impeach'd, notwithstanding those mighty distributions of it ; because he will act according to his own Wisdom and Pleasure, and not according to Mens fancies and humors ? Must Purblind Reason be the Judge and Director, how God shall dispose of his own, rather than his own Infinite Wisdom and Sovereign Will ? Is God less good, because there are numberless nothings, which he is able to bring into being ? He could Create a World of more Creatures than he hath done : doth he therefore wish evil to them by letting them remain in that nothing from whence he could draw them ? No, but he denies that good to them, which he is able, if he pleased, to confer upon them.

If God doth not give that good to a Creature which it wants by its own demerit, can he be said to wish evil to it ; or only to deny that goodness which the Creature hath forfeited, † and which is at Gods liberty to retain or disperse ? Though God cannot but love his own Image where he finds it, yet when this Image is lost, and the Devils Image voluntarily received, he may choose whether he will manifest his goodness to such a one or no. Will you not account that Man liberal, that distributes his Alms to a great company, though he rejects some ? Much more will you account him good, if he rejects none that implore him, but dispenseth his doles to every one upon their Petition : And is he not good, because he will not bestow a Farthing upon those that Address not themselves to him ? God is so good, that he denies not the best good to those that seek him : He hath promised Life and Happiness to them that do so. Is he less good, because he will not distribute his goodness to those that despise him ? Though he be Good, yet his Wisdom is the Rule of dispensing his Goodness.

† Camer<sup>o</sup>  
p. 30.

6. *The severe Punishment of Offenders, and the Afflictions he inflicts upon his Servants, are no violations of his Goodness.* The Notion of Gods Vindictive Justice is as naturally inbred, and implanted in the mind of Man, as that of his Goodness, and those two Sentiments never shockt one another. The Heathen never thought him bad because he was just, nor unrighteous because he was good. God being Infinitely good, cannot possibly intend or act any thing but what is good : *Thou art good, and thou dost good, i.e.* whatsoever thou dost is good, whatsoever it be, pleasant or painful to the Creature : \* Punishments themselves are not a Moral Evil in the Person that inflicts, though they are a Natural Evil in the Person that suffers them. In ordering Punishment to the VVicked, Good is added to Evil ; In ordering Impunity to the VVicked, Evil is added to Evil. To punish VVickedness is Right, therefore Good : To leave men uncontroul'd in their VVickedness, is Unrighteous, and therefore Bad. But again, Shall his Justice in some few Judgments in the VVorld, impeach his Goodness, more than his wonderful Patience to Sinners is able to silence the Calumnies against him ? Is not his hand fuller of gracious Doles, than of dreadful Thunderbolts ? Doth he not oftner seem forgetful of his Justice, when he pours out upon the guilty the Streams of his Mercy, than to be forgetful of his Goodness, when he sprinkles in the VVorld some drops of his VVrath ?

\* Ps. 119. 68.

† Boetius.

First,



First, Gods Judgments in the World, do not infringe his Goodness; For

\* Ex. d. 33.  
19.

† Exod. 34. 7.

\* Heb. 11. 14.

1. *The justice of God is a part of the goodness of his Nature.* God himself thought so, when he told *Moses*, he would make all his *Goodness* pass before him \*: He leaves not out in that enumeration of the parts of it, his resolution, by no means to clear the Guilty, but to visit the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children †. 'Tis a property of *goodness* to hate evil, and therefore a property of *goodness* to punish it: 'Tis no less Righteousness to give according to the deserts of a Person in a way of Punishment, than to reward a Person that obeys his Precepts in a way of Recompence. VVhatsoever is Righteous is Good; Sin is evil, and therefore whatsoever doth witness against it, is good; His Goodness therefore shines in his Justice, for without being just he could not be good. Sin is a Moral Disorder in the VVorld: Every Sin is Injustice: Injustice breaks Gods Order in the VVorld; there is a necessity therefore of Justice to put the VVorld in order. Punishment orders the Person committing the Injury, who when he will not be in the order of Obedience, must be in the order of suffering for Gods Honour. The goodness of all things which God pronounced so, consisted in their order and beneficial helpfulness to one another: When this order is inverted, the goodness of the Creature ceaseth: If it be a bad thing to spoil this order, Is it not a part of Divine Goodness to reduce them into order, that they may be reduced in some measure to their goodness? Do we ever account a Governor less in goodness, because he is exact in Justice, and punisheth that which makes a disorder in his Government? And is it a diminution of the Divine Goodness, to punish that which makes a Disorder in the VVorld? As VVisdom without Goodness would be a Serpentine Craft, and issue in destruction; so Goodness without Justice would be impotent Indulgence, and cast things into confusion. When *Abels* Blood cryed out for Vengeance against *Cain*, it spake a good thing; Christs Blood speaking better things than the Blood of *Abel*, implies that *Abels* Blood spake a good thing; the comparative implies a positive \*. If it were the goodness of that Innocent Blood to demand Justice, it could not be a badness in the Sovereign of the World to execute it. How can God sustain the part of a Good and Righteous Judge, if he did not preserve Humane Society? And how would it be preserved, without manifesting himself by publick Judgments against publick Wrongs? Is there not as great a necessity that Goodness should have Instruments of Judgment, as that there should be Prisons, Bridewels, and Gibbets in a good Commonwealth? Did not the Thunderbolts of God sometimes roar in the Ears of Men, they would sin with a higher hand than they do, fly more in the face of God, make the World as much a Moral, as it was at first a Natural Chaos: The ingenuity of Men would be dampt, if there were not something to work upon their fears, to keep them in their due order. Impunity of the Innocent Person is worse than any Punishment. 'Tis a Misery to want Medicines for the Cure of a sharp Disease; and a Mark of goodness in a Prince to consult for the security of the Political Body, by cutting off a Gangren'd and corrupting Member: And what Prince would deserve the noble Title of Good, if he did not restrain by punishment those Evils, which impair the Publick Welfare? Is it not necessary that the examples of Sin, whereby others have been encourag'd to Wickedness, should be made examples of Justice, whereby the same Persons and others may be discourag'd from what before they were greedily inclin'd unto? Is not a hatred of what is bad and unworthy, as much a part of Divine Goodness, as a love to what is Excellent, and bears a Resemblance to himself? Could he possibly be accounted Good, that should bear the same degree of Affection to a prodigious Vice, as to a sublime Virtue? And should behave himself in the same manner of carriage to the Innocent and Culpable? Could you account him Good, if he did always with pleasure behold Evil, and perpetually suffer the Oppressions of the Innocent under unpunisht Wickedness? How should we know the Goodness of the Divine Nature, and his Affection to the goodness of his Creature, if he did not by some acts of severity witness his implacable aversion against Sin, and his care to preserve the



the good Government of the World? If corrupted Creatures should always be exempt from the effects of his Indignation, he would declare himself not to be Infinitely Good, because he would not be really Righteous. No Man thinks it a Natural Vice in the Sun by the power of its scorching heat, to dry up and consume the unwholesome Vapours of the Air; nor are the demonstrations of Divine Justice any blots upon his Goodness; since they are both for the defence and glory of his Holiness, and for the preservation of the beauty and order of the World.

2. *Is it not part of the Goodness of God to make Laws, and annex Threatnings; And shall it be an impeachment of his Goodness to support them?* The more severe Laws are made for deterring Evil, the better is that Prince accounted, in making such provision for the welfare of the Community. The design of Laws, and the design of upholding the honour of those Laws by the punishment of Offenders, is to promote Goodness and restrain Evil; The Execution of those Laws must be therefore pursuant to the same design of Goodness, which first settled them. Would it not be contrary to Goodness, to suffer that which was design'd for the support of Goodness, to be scorn'd and slighted? It would neither be prudence nor goodness, but folly and vice, to let Laws, which were made to promote Virtue, be broken with impunity. Would not this be to weaken Virtue, and give a new life and vigor to Vice? Not only the Righteousness of the Law itself, but the Wisdom of the Law-giver would be exposed to contempt, if the Violations of it remained uncontroll'd, and the Violence offer'd by Men pass'd unpunished. None but will acknowledge the Divine Precepts to be the Image of the Righteousness of God, and beneficial for the common good of the World; \* *The Law is holy, just and good*, and so is every Precept of it: The Law was for no other end, but to keep the Creature in subjection to, and dependance on God; This dependance could not be preserved without a Law, nor that Law be kept in Reputation without a Penalty; nor would that Penalty be significant without an Execution. Every Law loseth the nature of a Law, without a Penalty; and the Penalty loseth its vigor, without the infliction of it: How can those Laws attain their end, if the Transgressions of them be not punished? Would not the wickedness of Mens hearts be encouraged by such a kind of uncomely Goodness? And all the threatnings be to no other end, than to engender vain and fruitless fears in the minds of Men? Is it good for the Majesty of God to suffer it self to be trampled on by his Vassals? To suffer Men by their Rebellion to level his Law with the wickedness of their own hearts; and by impunity slight his own Glory, and encourage their Disobedience? Who would give any Man, any Prince, any Father that should do so, the name of a good Governor? If it were a fruit of Divine Goodness to make Laws, is it contrary to Goodness to support the honour of them? 'Tis every whit as rational, and as good to vindicate the honour of his Laws by Justice, as at first to settle them by Authority; As much goodness to vindicate it from Contempt, as at first to Enact it; As it is as much Wisdom to preserve a Law, as at first to frame it: Shall his Precepts be thought by him unworthy of a support, that were not thought by him unworthy to be made? The same reason of Goodness that led him to enjoin them, will lead him to revenge them. Did Evil appear odious to him, while he Enacted his Law; and would not his own Goodness, as well as his Wisdom appear odious to him, if he did never Execute it? Would it not be a denial of his own Goodness, to be led by the foolish and corrupt Judgment of his Creatures, and slight his own Law, because his Rebels spurn at it? Since he valued it before they could actually condemn it, would he not misjudge his own Law and his own Wisdom, discount from the true value of them, condemn his own Acts, censure his Precepts as Unrighteous, and therefore Evil and Injurious? Remove the differences between Good and Evil, look upon Vice and Virtue and Wickedness as Righteousness, if he thought his Commands unworthy of a Vindication? How can there be any support to the honour of his Precepts without sometimes Executing the severity of his Threatnings?

\* Rom. 7. 12.

And



And as to his Threatnings of Punishment for the breach of his Laws, are they not designed to discourage Wickedness, as the Promises of Reward were designed to encourage Goodness? Hath he not multiplied the one to scare Men from Sin, as well as the other to allure Men to Obedience? Is not the same Truth engaged to support the one as well as the other? And how could he be abundant in Goodness, if he were not abundant in Truth? Both are linkt together; \* If he neglected his Truth, he would be out of love with his own Goodness; since it cannot be manifested in performing the Promises to the Obedient, if it be not also manifested in executing his Threatnings upon the Rebellious. Had not God annexed Threatnings to his Laws, he would have had no care of his own Goodness. The Order between God and the Creature wherein the declaration of his Goodness consisted, might have been easily broken by his Creature: Man would have freed himself from subjection to God, been unaccountable to him. Had this consisted with that infinite Goodness whereby he loves himself, and loves his Creatures? As therefore the annexing Threatnings to his Law, was a part of his Goodness; the Execution of them is so far from being a blemish, that it is the honour of his Goodness. The Rewards of Obedience, and the Punishment of Disobedience refer to the same end, viz. the due manifestation of the valuation of his own Law, the glorifying his own Goodness, which enjoyed so beneficial a Law for Man, and the support of that goodness in the Creatures which by that Law he demands righteously and kindly of them.

3. Hence it follows, *That not to punish Evil would be a want of Goodness to himself.* The Goodness of God is an indulgent Goodness in a way of Wisdom and Reason; not a fond Goodness in a way of weakness and folly: Would it not be a weakness, always to bear with the Impenitent? A want of expressing a goodness to Goodness it self? Would not Goodness have more reason to complain for a want of Justice to rescue it, than Men have reason to complain for the exercise of Justice in the vindication of it? If God established all things in Order with Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, and God silently behold for ever this Order broken; would he not either charge himself with a want of Power, or a want of Will to preserve the Marks of his own Goodness? Would it be a kindness to himself to be careless of the breaches of his own Orders? His Throne would shake, yea, sink from under him, if Justice, whereby he Sentenceth, and Judgment, whereby he Executes his Sentence, were not the supports of it. † *Justice and Judgment are the habitation of thy Throne,* חֲסִידוֹ, the Stability or Foundation of thy Throne; So *Psal. 92. 2.* Man would forget his Relation to God, God would be unknown to be Sovereign of the World, were he careless of the breaches of his own Order. \* *The Lord is known by the Judgments which he Executes;* Is it not a part of his Goodness to preserve the indispensable Order between himself and his Creatures? His own Sovereignty which is good, and the subjection of the Creature to him as Sovereign, which is also good; The one would not be maintained in its due place, nor the other restrained in due limits without Punishment. Would it be a goodness in him to see Goodness it self trampled upon constantly, without some time or other appearing for the relief of it? Is it not a Goodness to secure his own Honour, to prevent further Evil? Is it not a Goodness to discourage Men by Judgments, sometimes from a contempt and ill use of his Bounty; as well as sometimes patiently to bear with them, and wait upon them for a Reformation? Must God be bad to himself, to be kind to his Enemies? And shall it be accounted an unkindness and a Mark of Evil in him not to suffer himself to be always outrag'd and defy'd? The World is wrong'd by Sin, as well as God is injur'd by it. How could God be good to himself, if he righted not his own Honour? Or be a good Governour of the World, if he did not sometimes witness against the Injuries it receives sometimes from the works of his hands? Would he be good to himself as a God, to be careless of his own Honour? Or good as the Rector of the World, and be regardless of the Worlds Confusion?

That



That God should give an Eternal good to that Creature that declines its Duty, and despiseth his Sovereignty, is not agreeable to the goodness of his Wisdom, or that of his Righteousness; 'Tis a part of Gods Goodness to love himself: Would he love his Sovereignty, if he saw it daily slighted, without sometimes discovering how much he values the Honour of it? Would he have any esteem for his own Goodness, if he beheld it trampled upon, without any will to vindicate it? Doth Mercy deserve the name of Cruelty, because it pleads against a Creature that hath so often abused it; and hath refused to have any pity exercised towards it in a Righteous and Regular way? Is Sovereignty destitute of Goodness, because it preserves its Honour against one that would not have it Reign over him? Would he not seem by such a regardlessness to renounce his own Essence, undervalue and undermine his own Goodness, if he had not an implacable aversion to whatsoever is contrary to it? If Men turn Grace into Wantonness, is it not more reasonable he should turn his Grace into Justice?

All his Attributes, which are parts of his Goodness, engage him to punish Sin; without it his Authority would be vilified, his Purity stain'd, his Power derided, his Truth disgraced, his Justice scorn'd, his Wisdom slighted: He would be thought to have dissembled in his Laws, and be judged, according to the Rules of Reason, to be void of true Goodness.

4. *Punishment is not the primary Intention of God.* 'Tis his Goodness that he hath no mind to Punish; and therefore he hath put a bar to Evil by his Prohibitions and Threatnings, that he might prevent Sin, and consequently any occasions of severity against his Creature\*: The principal Intention of God in his Law, was to encourage Goodness, that he might reward it; And when by the commission of Evil God is provoked to Punish, and takes the Sword into his hand, he doth not act against the Nature of his Goodness, but against the first intention of his Goodness in his Precepts, which was to Reward: As a good Judge principally intendeds in the Exercise of his Office, to protect good Men from Violence, and maintain the honour of the Laws; yet consequently to punish bad Men, without which the Protection of the good would not be secured, nor the Honour of the Law be supported: And a good Judge in the Exercise of his Office, doth principally intend the encouragement of the good, and wisheth there were no wickedness, that might occasion Punishment; and when he doth Sentence a Malefactor in order to the Execution of him, he doth not act against the goodness of his Nature, but pursuant to the Duty of his Place; but wisheth he had no occasion for such severity. Thus God seems to speak of himself; † He calls the act of his Wrath, his *Strange Work*, his *Strange Act*; A work not against his Nature, as the Governor of the World; but against his first Intention as Creator, which was to manifest his Goodness: Therefore he moves with a slow pace in those Acts, brings out his Judgments with relentings of heart, and seems to cast out his Thunderbolts with a trembling hand: *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*\*: And therefore he *delights not in the death of a Sinner*†: Not in Death as Death, in Punishment as Punishment, but as it reduceth the suffering Creature to the Order of his Precept, or reduceth him into order under his Power, or reforms others who are Spectators of the Punishment upon a Criminal of their own Nature: God only hates the Sin, not the Sinner: He desires only the destruction of the one, not the misery of the other; The Nature of a Man doth not displease him, because it is a work of his own Goodness; but the Nature of the Sinner displeaseth him, because it is a work of the Sinners own extravagance. Divine Goodness pitcheth not its hatred primarily upon the Sinner, but upon the Sin: But since he cannot punish the Sin, without punishing the Subject, to which it cleaves, the Sinner falls under his lash. Whoever regards a good Judge as an Enemy to the Malefactor, but as an Enemy to his Crime, when he doth Sentence and Execute him?

\*Zerovecius,  
de satisfact.  
Part. 1. cap. 1.  
p. 3. 4.

† Isaiah 58.  
21.

\* Lam. 3. 33.  
† Ezek. 33. 11.

\* Suarez, Vol.  
1. de Deo lib.  
3. cap. 7. p.  
146.



5. *Judgments in the World have a goodness in them, therefore they are no Impeachments of the Goodness of God.*

1. *A Goodness in their preparations.* He sends not Judgments without giving warnings : His Justice is so far from extinguishing his Goodness, that his Goodness rather shines out in the preparations of his Justice : He gives Men time, and sends them Messengers to persuade them to another temper of mind, that he may change his Hand, and exercise his Liberality, where he threatned his Severity. When the *Heathen* had Presages of some Evil upon their Persons or Countreys, they took them for invitations to Repentance, excited themselves to many acts of Devotion, implored his Favour, and often Experimented it. The *Ninivites* upon the Proclamation of the destruction of their City by *Jonah*, fell to Petitioning him ; whereby they signified, That they thought him good, though he were just, and more prone to Pity than Severity ; and their humble Carriage caused the Arrows he had ready against them, to drop out of his hands \*. When he brandisheth his Sword, he wishes for some to stand in that Gap to mollifie his anger, that he might not strike the fatal blow ; † *I sought for a Man among them that should make up the Hedge, and stand in the Gap before me in the Land, that I should not destroy it.* He was desirous that his Creatures might be in a capacity to receive the Marks of his Bounty \* : This he signified not obscurely to *Moses*, *Exod.* 32. 10. when he spoke to him to let him alone, that his anger might wax hot against the People, after they had made a Golden Calf and Worshipped it. *Let me alone*, said God : Not that *Moses* restrained him, saith *Chrysostom*, who spake nothing to him, but stood silent before him, and knew nothing of the Peoples Idolatry ; But God would give him an occasion of praying for them, that he might exercise his Mercy towards them ; yet in such a manner, that the People being struck with a sense of their Crime, and the horror of Divine Justice, they might be amended for the future ; when they should understand that their Death was not averted by their own Merit or Intercession, but by *Moses* his Patronage of them, and pleading for them. As we see sometimes Masters and Fathers angry with their Servants and Children, and preparing themselves to punish them, but secretly wish some Friend to intercede for them, and take them out of their hands : There is a Goodness shining in the preparations of his Judgments.

2. *A Goodness in the Execution of them.* They are good, as they shew God disaffected to Evil, and conduce to the glory of his Holiness, and deter others from presumptuous Sins : † *I will be glorified in all that draw near unto me ;* in his Judgment upon *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the Sons of *Aaron*, for Offering strange Fire.

By them God preserves the excellent Footsteps of his own Goodness in his Creation and his Law ; and curbs the Licentiousness of Men, and contains them within the bounds of their Duty. *Thy Judgments are good*, saith the *Psalmist* \*, *i. e.* Thy Judicial proceedings upon the Wicked : For he desires God there, to turn away by some signal act, the reproach the Wicked cast upon him. Can there be any thing more Miserable than to live in a World full of Wickedness, and void of the Marks of Divine Goodness and Justice to repress it ? Were there not Judgments in the World, Men would forget God, be insensible of his Government of the World, neglect the Exercises of Natural and Christian Duties ; Religion would be at its last gasp, and expire among them, and Men would pretend to break Gods Precepts by Gods Authority. Are they not good then, as they restrain the Creature from further Evils ? Affright others from the same Crimes, which they were inclinable to commit ? He strikes some, to reform others that are Spectators ; As *Apolonius* tam'd Pigeons, by beating Dogs before them. Punishments are Gods gracious warnings to others, not to venture upon those Crimes which they see attended with such Judgments. The Censers of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*

\* *Jonah* 3.  
9, 10.

† *Ezek* 22. 30.

\* *Cressel An-  
stolog. Decad.*  
2. p. 162.

† *Deut.* 10. 3.

\* *Psal.* 119.  
*Psal.* 39.



*Abram* were to be wrought into Plates for a covering of the Altar, to abide there as a *Memento* to others, not to approach to the Exercise of the Priestly Office without an authoritative call from God \*; And those Judgments exercised in the former Ages of the World, were intended by Divine Goodness for warnings, even in Evangelical times. *Lots* Wife was turned into a Pillar of Salt, to prevent Men from Apostacy: That use Christ himself makes of it, in the exhortation against *turning back* †. And, \* *The Righteous shall wash his Feet in the Blood of the Wicked*. When God shall drench his Sword in the Blood of the Wicked, the Righteous shall take occasion from thence to purifie themselves, and reform their Ways, and look to the Paths of their Feet. Would not Impunity be hurtful to the World, and Men receive encouragement to Sin, if severities sometimes did not bridle them from the practice of their Inclinations? Sometimes the Sinner himself is reform'd, and sometimes removed from being an example to others. Though Thunder be an affrighting noise, and Lightning a scaring flash, yet they have a liberal goodness in them, in shattering and consuming those contagious Vapours which burden and infect the Air, and thereby render it more clear and healthful.

\* Num. 16.  
38, 40.

† Luke 17.  
32, 33.  
\* Psal. 8. 10.

Again, There are few acts of Divine Justice upon a People, but are in the very Execution of them attended with demonstrations of his Goodness to others: He is a Protector of his own, while he is a Revenger on his Enemies; When he rides upon his Horses in *anger* against some, his Chariots are *Chariots of Salvation* to others \*. Terrour makes way for Salvation: The overthrow of *Pharaoh* and the strength of his Nation compleated the deliverance of the *Israelites*. Had not the *Aegyptians* met with their Destruction, the *Israelites* had unavoidably met with their Ruine, against all the Promises God had made to them, and to the defamation of his former Justice in the former Plagues upon their Oppressors. The death of *Herod* was the security of *Peter*, and the rest of the Malic'd Christians. The gracious deliverance of good Men is often occasion'd by some severe stroak upon some eminent Persecutor: The destruction of the Oppressor is the rescue of the Innocent.

\* Hab. 3. 8.

Again, Where is there a *Judgment* but leaves more Criminals behind than it sweeps away, that deserved to be involved in the same fate with the rest? More *Aegyptians* were left behind to possess and enjoy the goodness of their fruitful Land, than they were that were hurried into another World by the overflowing Waves; Is not this a Mark of goodness as well as severity?

Again, Is it not a goodness in him not to pour out Judgments according to the greatness of his Power? To go gradually to work with those, whom he might in a moment blow to destruction with one breath of his Mouth?

Again, He sometimes exerciseth *Judgments* upon some, to form a new Generation for himself; He destroy'd an old World, to raise a new one more Righteous; As a Man pulls down his old Buildings to erect a sounder and more stately Fabrick. To sum up what hath been said in this particular; How could God be a Friend to Goodness, if he were not an Enemy to Evil? How could he shew his enmity to Evil, without revenging the abuse and contempt of his Goodness? God would rather have the Repentance of a Sinner than his Punishment; but the Sinner would rather expose himself to the severest frowns of God, than pursue those Methods wherein he hath settled the conveyances of his kindness; *You will not come to me that you might have Life*, saith Christ. How is Eternity of Punishment inconsistent with the Goodness of God? Nay, how can God be good without it? If Wickedness always remain in the Nature of Man, Is it not fit the Rod should always remain on the Back of Man? Is it a want of goodness that keeps an incorrigible Offender in Chains, in a Bridewell? While Sin remains, it's fit it should be Punished: Would not God else be an Enemy to his own Goodness; and shew favour to that which doth abuse it, and is contrary to it? He hath threatned Eternal Flames to Sinners, that he might the more strongly excite them to a Reformation of their Ways, and a Practice of his Precepts.



In those Threatnings he hath manifested his Goodness ; And can it be bad in him to defend what his Goodness hath Commanded, and Execute what his Goodness hath Threatned ? His Truth is also a part of his Goodness ; for it is nothing but his Goodness performing that which it oblig'd him to do. That is the first thing, Severe Judgments in the World are no Impeachments of his Goodness.

2. *The Afflictions God inflicts upon his Servants, are no violations of his Goodness.* Sometimes God afflicts Men for their Temporal and Eternal good ; for the good of their Grace in order to the good of their Glory ; which is a more excellent Good than Afflictions can be an Evil. The Heathens reflected upon *Ulysses* his hardship as a Mark of *Jupiters* goodness and love to him, that his Virtue might be more conspicuous. By strong Persecutions brought upon the Church, her Lethargy is Cur'd, her Chaff Purg'd, the glorious Fruit of the Gospel brought forth in the lives of her Children ; The number of her Profelytes multiply, and the strength of her weak ones is increased, by the Testimonies of Courage and Constancy which the stronger present to them in their Sufferings. Do those good Effects speak a want of goodness in God, who brings them into this condition ? By those he cures his People of their Corruptions, and promotes their Glory by giving them the honour of suffering for the Truth, and raiseth their Spirits to a Divine pitch. The Epistles of *Paul* to the *Ephes.* *Philip.* and *Colos.* wrote by him while he was in *Nero's* Chains, seem to have a higher strain than some of those he wrote when was at liberty.

\* Heb. 12.  
6, 7.

† 1 Cor. 11.  
32.

• Psal. 89. 33.

As for Afflictions, they are Marks of a greater measure of Fatherly Goodness than he discovers to those that live in an uninterrupted Prosperity, who are not dignifi'd with that glorious Title of *Sons*, as those are that *he chasteneth* \*. Can any question the goodness of the Father that Corrects his Child to prevent his Vice and Ruine, and breed him up to Vertue and Honour ? It would be a Cruelty in a Father leaving his Child without Chastisement, to leave him to that Misery an ill Education would reduce him to. God judges us that we might not be condemned with the World †. Is it not a greater Goodness to separate us from the World to Happiness by his Scourge, than to leave us to the condemnation of the World for our Sins ? Is it not a greater Goodness to make us smart here, than to see us scorcht hereafter ? As he is our Shepherd, it is no part of his Enmity or ill will to us, to make us feel sometimes the weight of his Shepherds Crook, to reduce us from our Stragling. The visiting our Transgressions with Rods, and our Iniquities with Stripes, is one of the Articles of the Covenant of Grace, wherein the greatest lustre of his Goodness appears\*. The advantage and gain of our Afflictions is a greater Testimony of his Goodness to us, than the pain can be of his Unkindness : The Smart is well recompenced by the accession of clearer Graces.

† Heb. 12. 10.

It is rather a high Mark of his Goodness, than an Argument for the want of it, that he treats us as his Children, and will not suffer us to run into that Destruction we are more ambitious of, than the Happiness he hath prepared for us, and by Afflictions he fits us for the partaking of, by imparting his Holiness together with the inflicting his Rod †. That is the third thing, God is Good.

The Fourth thing is, *The manifestation of this Goodness in Creation, Redemption, and Providence.*

1. *In Creation.* This is apparent from what hath been said before, That no other Attribute could be the Motive of his Creating, but his Goodness ; His Goodness was the Cause that he made any thing, and his Wisdom was the Cause that he made every thing in Order and Harmony : He pronounced every thing good, i. e. such as became his Goodness to bring forth into Being, and



and rested in them more, as they were Stamps of his Goodness, than as they were Marks of his Power, or Beams of his Wildom : And if all Creatures were able to answer to this Question, *What that was which Created them ?* The Answer would be, Almighty Power, but employed by the Motion of Infinite Goodness\*. All the varieties of Creatures are so many Apparitions of this Goodness. Though God be one, yet he cannot appear as a God but in variety. As the greatness of Power is not manifest but in variety of Works, and an Acute Understanding not discover'd, but in variety of Reasonings ; so an Infinite Goodness is not so apparent, as in variety of Communications.

\* Cusan.  
p. 228.

1. *The Creation proceeds from Goodness.* 'Tis the Goodness of God to extract such multitude of things from the depths of nothing. Because God is Good, things have a Being ; If he had not been Good, nothing could have been Good ; Nothing could have imparted that which it possessed not : Nothing but Goodness could have communicated to things an Excellency, which before they wanted. Being is much more Excellent than nothing. By this Goodness therefore the whole Creation was brought out of the dark Womb of Nothing : This formed their Natures, this beaurified them with their several Ornaments and Perfections, whereby every thing was enabled to act for the good of the Common World. God did not Create things because he was a Living Being ; but because he was a Good Being : No Creature brought forth any thing in the World meerly because it is ; but because it is good, and by a Communicated Goodness fitted for such a Production. If God had been the Creating Principle of things, only as he was a Living Being, or as he was an Understanding Being ; then all things should have partaken of Life and Understanding ; because all things were to bear some Characters of the Deity upon them. If by Understanding solely God were the Creator of all things, all things should have born the Mark of the Deity upon them, and should have been more or less Understanding ; but he Created things as he was Good, and by Goodness he renders all things more or less like himself : Hence every thing is accounted more noble, not in regard of its Being, but in regard of the beneficialness of its Nature. The Being of things was not the End of God in Creating, but the Goodness of their Being : God did not rest from his Works, because they were his Works, i. e. because they had a Being, but because they had a Good Being ; \* because they were naturally useful to the Universe : Nothing was more pleasing to him, than to behold those Shadows and Copies of his own Goodness in his Works.

\* Gen. 1.

2. *Creation was the first act of Goodness without himself.* † When he was alone from Eternity, he contented himself with himself, abounding in his own Blessedness, delighting in that abundance : He was incomprehensively rich in the possession of an unstain'd Felicity. \* This Creation was the first Efflux of his Goodness without himself : For the work of Creation cannot be called a work of Mercy : Mercy supposeth a Creature miserable ; but that which hath no Being, is subject to no Misery : For to be Miserable, supposeth a Nature in Being, and deprived of that Good which belongs to the pleasure and felicity of Nature ; but since there was no Being, there could be no Misery : The Creation therefore was not an act of Mercy, but an act of sole Goodness : And therefore it was the Speech of an *Heathen*, That when God first set upon the Creation of the World, he transform'd himself into Love and Goodness, 'Εκ ἔρωτα μεταβλήθη πρὸς θεὸν πολλοῖα δημιουργεῖν. This led forth and animated his Power, the first moment it drew the Universe out of the Womb of Nothing ; And

† Petav. Theol.  
log. Dogmat.  
Tom. 1. p. 401.

\* Lessius de  
Perfeci. div.  
p. 100.

† Pherecytes.

3. *There is not one Creature but hath a Character of his Goodness.* The whole World is a Map to Represent, and a Herald to proclaim this Perfection : 'Tis as difficult not to see something of it in every Creature with the Eye of our Minds, as it is not to see the Beams of the Shining Sun with those of our Bodies:



\* *Psalm*. 145. 9. Bodies. \* *He is good to all* : He is therefore good in all ; Not a drop of the Creation, but is a drop of his Goodness.

These are the Colours worn upon the Heads of every Creature. As in every Spark the light of the Fire is manifested, so doth every grain of the Creation wear the visible Badges of this Perfection. In all the Lights, the Father of Lights hath made the riches of Goodness apparent ; No Creature is silent in it, 'tis legible to all Nations in every work of his hands. That as it is said of Christ, † *In the Volume of thy Book it is written of me* : In the Volume of the Book of the Scripture 'tis written of me, and my Goodness in Redemption ; So it may be said of God, In the *Volume* of the Book of the Creature 'tis written of me, and my Goodness in Creation. Every Creature is a Page in this Book, whose *Line is gone through all the Earth, and their Words to the end of the World* \*. Though indeed the less Goodness in some is obscur'd by the more resplendent Goodness he hath imparted unto others : What an admirable piece of Goodness is it to communicate Life to a Fly ? How should we stand gazing upon it, till we turn our Eye inwards, and view our own Frame, which is much more ravishing ?

But let us see the Goodness of God in the Creation of Man.

1. *In the Being and Nature of Man.* God hath with a liberal hand conferr'd upon every Creature the best Being it was capable of in that Station and Order, and conducing to that end and use in the World he intended it for : But when you have run over all the measures of Goodness God hath poured forth upon other Creatures, you will find a greater fulness of it in the Nature of Man, whom he hath placed in a more Sublime Condition, and endued with choicer Prerogatives than other Creatures : He was made but little lower than the Angels, and much more loftily crown'd with glory and honour than other Creatures †. Had it not been for Divine Goodness, this Excellent Creature had lain wrapt up in the Abyss of nothing : Or if he had call'd it out of nothing, there might have been less of Skill, and less of Goodness display'd in the forming of it, and a lesser kind of Being imparted to it, than what he hath conferr'd.

1. *How much of Goodness is visible in his Body ?* God drew out some part of the Dust of the Ground, and Copy'd out this Perfection, as well as that of his Power, on that mean Matter, by erecting it into the form of Man, quickning that Earth by the Inspiration of a *living Soul* \* : Of this Matter he compos'd an Excellent Body in regard of the Majesty of the Face, Erectness of its Stature, and Grace of every Part : How neatly hath he wrought this *Tabernacle of Clay, this Earthly House*, as the *Apostle* calls it † ? A curious wrought piece of Needle-work, a Comely Artifice ; \* an Embroider'd Case for an Harmonious Lute : What *variety of Members*, with a due proportion, without confusion, beautiful to sight, excellent for use, powerful for strength ? It hath Eyes to conduct its Motion, to serve in Matter for the Food and delight of the Understanding : Ears to let in the pleasure of Sounds, to convey Intelligence of the Affairs of the World, and the Counsels of Heaven to a more noble Mind : It hath a Tongue to Express, and sound forth what the learn'd Inhabitant in it thinks ; and Hands to act what the inward Counsellor directs ; and Feet to support the Fabrick : 'Tis temper'd with a kindly Heat, and an Oily Moisture for Motion, and endued with conveyances for Air to qualifie the fury of the Heat, and Nourishment to supply the decays of Moisture : 'Tis a Cabinet fitted by Divine Goodness for the enclosing a rich Jewel ; a Palace made of Dust, to lodge in it the Viceroy of the World : An Instrument dispos'd for the operations of the Nobler Soul, which he intended to unite to that Refined Matter : What is there in the situation of every part, in the proportion of every Member, in the usefulness of every Limb and String to the Offices of the Body, and Service of the Soul ? What is there in the whole Structure that doth not inform us of the Goodness of God ?

2. But



2. But what is this *to that goodness which shines in the Nature of the Soul?* Who can express the wonders of that Comeliness that is wrapt up in this Mask of Clay? A Soul endued with a clearness of Understanding and freedom of Will: Faculties no sooner fram'd, but they were able to produce the Operations they were intended for; A Soul that excelled the whole World, that comprehended the whole Creation; A Soul that evidenced the extent of its Skill, in *giving names* to all that variety of Creatures, which had issued out of the hand of Divine Power \*; A Soul able to discover the Nature of other Creatures, and manage and conduct their Motions. In the Ruines of a Palace we may see the Curiosity display'd, and the Cost expended in the building of it; In the Ruines of this fallen Structure, we still find it capable of a mighty Knowledge; a Reason able to regulate Affairs, govern States, order more Mighty and Massy Creatures, find out witty Inventions; There is still an Understanding to irradiate the other Faculties, a Mind to contemplate its own Creator, a Judgment to discern the differences between Good and Evil, Vice and Vertue, which the Goodness of God hath not granted to any lower Creature. These Excellent Faculties, together with the Power of Self-reflection, and the swiftness of the Mind in running over the things of the Creation, are astonishing Gleams of the vast Goodness of that Divine Hand which ennobled this Frame. To the other Creatures of this World, God had given out some small Mites from his Treasury; but in the Perfections of Man, he hath opened the more secret parts of his Exchequer, and liberally bestow'd those Doles, which he hath not expended upon the other Creatures on Earth.

\* Gen. 2. 19.

3. Besides this, He did not only make Man so noble a Creature in his Frame, but *he made him after his own Image in Holiness.* He imparted to him a Spark of his own Comeliness, in order to a communion with himself in Happiness, had Man stood his ground in his tryal, and used those Faculties well, which had been the gift of his Bountiful Creator: He *made Man after his Image*, after his own Image; † That as a Coyn bears the Image of the Prince, so did the Soul of Man the *Image of God*: Not the Image of Angels, though the speech be in the Plural Number, [*Let us make Man.*] 'Tis not to a Creature, but to a Creator; Let *us*, that are his Makers, make him in the Image of his Makers. God Created Man, Angels did not Create him; God Created Man in his *own* Image, not therefore in the Image of Angels: The Nature of God, and the Nature of Angels are not the same. Where in the whole Scripture is Man said to be made after the Image of Angels? God made Man not in the Image of Angels, to be conformed to them as his Prototype; but in the Image of the Blessed God, to be conformed to the Divine Nature: That as he was conform'd to the Image of his Holiness, he might also partake of the Image of his Blessedness, which without it could not be attained: For as the felicity of God could not be clear without an unspotted Holiness, so neither can there be a glorious Happiness without Purity in the Creature; This God provided for in his Creation of Man, giving him such accomplishments in those two Excellent Pieces of Soul and Body, that nothing was wanting to him but his own will, to instate him in an invariable Felicity. He was possessed with such a Nature by the hand of Divine Goodness, such a loftiness of Understanding, and purity of Faculties, that he might have been for ever Happy as well as the standing Angels: And he was placed in such a Condition, that moved the envy of fallen Spirits; He had as much Grace bestow'd upon him, as was proportionable to that Covenant God then made with him: The Tenor of which was, That his Life should continue so long as his Obedience, and his Happiness endure so long as his Integrity: And as God by Creation had given him an Integrity of Nature, so he had given him a power to persist in it, if he would. Herein is the Goodness of God display'd, that he made Man after his own Image.

† Gen. 1. 26, 27.

4. As



4. As to the Life of Man in this World, God by an immense Goodness Copied out in him the whole Creation, and made him an Abridgment of the higher and lower World; a little World in a greater one. The Link of the two Worlds, of Heaven and Earth, as the Spiritual and Corporeal Natures are united in him, the Earth in the Dust of his Body, and the Heavens in the Chrystal of his Soul: He hath the upper Springs of the Life of Angels in his Reason, and the neather Springs of the Life of Animals in his Sense. God display'd those Vertues in Man, which he had discover'd in the rest of the lower Creation; but besides the communication which he had with Earth in his Nature, God gave him a participation with Heaven in his Spirit. A meer Bodily Being he hath given to the Heavens, Earth, Elements; a Vegetative Life, or a Life of Growth he hath vouchsafed to the Plants of the Ground: He hath stretched out his Liberality more to Animals and Beasts by giving them Sense. All these hath his Goodness linkt in Man, Being, Life, Sense, with a richer Dole than any of those Creatures have receiv'd in a Rational, Intellectual Life, whereby he approacheth to the Nature of Angels. This some of the Jews understood. \* God breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul, □□ Breath of Lives, in the Hebrew; not one sort of Life, but that variety of Lives which he had imparted to other Creatures: All the Perfections scattered in other Creatures, do unitedly meet in Man: So that Philo might well call him every Creature, the Model of the whole Creation: His Soul is Heaven, and his Body is Earth †. So that the Immensity of his Goodness to Man, is as great as all that Goodness you behold in Sensitive and Intelligible things.

\* Gen. 2. 7.

† Eusebius, lib. 5. cap. 9.

5. All this was free Goodness. God Eternally possessed his own Felicity in himself, and had no need of the Existence of any thing without himself for his satisfaction. Man before his Being could have no good qualities to invite God to make him so Excellent a Fabrick: For being nothing, he was as unable to allure and merit, as to bring himself into Being; Nay, he Created a Multitude of Men, who he foresaw, would behave themselves in as ungrateful a manner; as if they had not been his Creatures, but had bestow'd that rich variety upon themselves without the hand of a Superior Benefactor.

\* Psal. 8. 1, 4.

How great is this Goodness, that hath made us Models of the whole Creation, tied together Heaven and Earth in our Nature, when he might have rankt us among the lower Creatures of the Earth, made us meer Bodies as the Stones, or meer Animals as the Brutes, and denied us those Capacious Souls, whereby we might both know him and enjoy him? What could Man have been more, unless he had been the Original, which was impossible? He could not be greater than to be an Image of the Deity, an Epitome of the whole Creation. Well may we cry out with the Psalmist, \* O Lord, our Lord, How Excellent is thy Name, the Name of thy Goodness in all the Earth? How more particularly in Man: What is Man that thou art mindful of him? What is a little Clod of Earth and Dust, that thou shouldest ennoble him with so rich a Nature, and Engrave upon him such Characters of thy Immense Being?

6. The Goodness of God appears in the Conveniencies he provided for, and gave to Man. As God gave him a Being Morally perfect in regard of Righteousness, so he gave him a Being Naturally perfect in regard of delightful Conveniencies, which was the fruit of Excellent Goodness; Since there was no quality in Man, to invite God to provide him so Rich a World, nor to bestow upon him so Comely a Being.

1. The World was made for Man. Since Angels have not need of any thing in this World, and are above the Conveniencies of Earth and Air, it will follow, that Man being the noblest Creature on the Earth, was the more



more immediate End of the visible Creation. All Inferior things are made to be subservient to those that have a more excellent Prerogative of Nature; and therefore all things for Man, who exceeds all the rest in Dignity: As Man was made for the honour of God, so the World was made for the support and delight of Man, in order to his performing the Service due from him to God. The Empire God settled Man in as his Lieutenant over the Works of his Hands, when he gave him possession of *Paradise*, is a clear manifestation of it: God put all things under his Feet, and gave him a deputed Dominion over the rest of the Creatures under himself, as the absolute Sovereign;

\* *Thou madest him to have Dominion over the Works of thy Hands, thou hast put all things under his Feet, all Sheep and Oxen, yea, and the Beasts of the Field, the Fowl of the Air, and the Fish of the Sea, yea, and whatsoever passeth through the Paths of the Sea.* What less is witness to by the Calamity, all

Creatures were subjected to by the Corruption of Mans Nature? Then was the Earth Curs'd, and a black Cloud flung upon the Beauty of the Creation, and the strength and vigor of it languisheth to this day under the Curse

of God †, and groans under that vanity the Sin of Man subjected it to\*.

The Treasons of Man against God, brought Misery upon that which was fram'd for the use of Man: As when the Majesty of a Prince is violated by the Treason and Rebellion of his Subjects, all that which belongs to them, and was before the free Gift of the Prince to them is forfeit, their Habitations, Palaces, Cattle, all that belongs to them bear the Marks of his Sovereign fury: Had not the Delicacies of the Earth been made for the use of Man, they had not fallen under the Indignation of God upon the Sin of Man.

God Crown'd the Earth with his Goodness to gratifie Man; gave Man a right to serve himself of the delightful Creatures he had provided; † yea, and after Man had forfeited all by Sin, and God had wash'd again the Creature in a Deluge, he renews the Creation, and delivers it again into the hand of Man, binding all Creatures to pay a Respect to him, and Recognize him as their Lord, either spontaneously or by force; \* and commissions them all to fill the heart of Man with food and gladness: And he loves all Creatures: s they conduce to the good of, and are serviceable to his prime Creature which he set up for his own glory: And therefore when he loves a Person, he loves what belongs to him: He takes care of *Jacob* and his Cattle: Of Penitent *Nineveh* and their Cattle: † As when he sends Judgments upon Men, he destroys their Goods.

\* Psal. 8. 6,  
7. 8.

† Gen. 2. 17,  
18.  
\* Rom. 8. 20,  
22.

† Gen. 1. 26,  
29. 30.

\* Gen. 9. 1, 3.

† Jonah 4. 11.

2. *God richly furnish'd the World for Man.* He did not only Erect a stately Palace for his Habitation, but provided all kind of Furniture as a Mark of his Goodness for the Entertainment of his Creature Man: He Arch'd over his Habitation with a bespangled Heaven, and Floor'd it with a solid Earth, and spread a curious wrought Tapestry upon the Ground where he was to tread, and seem'd to sweep all the Rubbish of the Chaos to the two uninhabitable Poles. When at the first Creation of the Matter the Waters cover'd the Earth, and rendred it uninhabitable for Man, God Drain'd them into the proper Channels he had founded for them, and set a bound that they might not pass over, that they turn not again to cover the Earth\*. They fled and hasted away to their proper Stations, † as if they were ambitious to deny their own Nature, and content themselves with an Imprisonment for the convenient Habitation of him, who was to be appointed Lord of the World. He hath set up standing Lights in the Heaven, to direct our Motion and to regulate the Seasons: The Sun was Created, that Man might see to go forth to his Labour\*: Both Sun and Moon though set in the Heaven, were form'd to give light on the Earth†. The Air is his Aviary, the Sea and Rivers his Fish-ponds, the Valleys his Granary, the Mountains his Magazine; The first afford Man Creatures for Nourishment, the other Metals for Perfection: The Animals were Created for the support of the life of Man, the Herbs of the Ground were provided for the maintenance of their Lives, and gentle

\* Gen. 1. 9.

† Psal. 104.  
7. 8. 9.

\* Psal. 104.  
23. 23.

† Gen. 1. 15,  
17.

K k k k

Dews,



\* Psal. 104.  
24.

† Gen. 2. 19.  
20.

\* Gen. 2. 9.

† Neh. 9. 25.

Dews, and moistening Showers, and in some places slimy Clouds appointed to render the Earth fruitful, and capable to offer to Man and Beast what was fit for their Nourishment. He hath peopled every Element with a variety of Creatures both for necessity and delight; all furnish'd with useful qualities for the Service of Man. There is not the most despicable thing in the whole Creation, but it is endued with a Nature to contribute something for our Welfare; either as Food to Nourish us when we are Healthful, or as Medicine to Cure us when we are Distemper'd, or as a Garment to Cloath us when we are Naked, and Arm us against the Cold of the Season, or as a refreshment when we are weary, or as a delight when we are sad; All serve for Necessity or Ornament, either to spread our Table, beautify our Dwellings, furnish our Closets, or store our Wardrobes: \* *The whole Earth is full of his Riches.* Nothing but by the rich Goodness of God is exquisitely accommodated in the numerous brood of things, immediately or mediately for the use of Man; All in the issue conspire together to render the World a delightful Residence for Man. And therefore all the living Creatures were brought by God to attend upon Man after his Creation, to receive a Mark of his Dominion over them by the *imposition of their Names* †. He did not only give variety of Senses to Man, but provided variety of delightful Objects in the World for every Sense; The Beauties of Light and Colours for our Eye, the Harmony of Sounds for our Ear, the Fragrancy of Odours for our Nostrils, and a Delicious Sweetness for our Palates: Some have qualities to pleasure all, every thing a quality to pleasure one or other: He doth not only present those things to our view, as Rich Men do in Ostentation their Goods: He makes us the Enjoyers as well as the Spectators, and gives us the Use as well as the Sight: And therefore he hath not only given us the Sight, but the Knowledge of them. He hath set up a Sun in the Heavens, to expose their outward Beauty and Conveniencies to our Sight; and the Candle of the Lord is in us, to expose their inward Qualities and Conveniencies to our Knowledge, that we might serve our selves of, and rejoyce in all this Furniture wherewith he hath garnish'd the World; and have wherewithal to employ the inquisitiveness of our Reason, as well as gratifie the pleasure of our Sense: And particularly, God provided for Innocent Man a delightful Mansion-house, a place of more special Beauty and Curiosity, the Garden of Eden, a delightful Paradise, a Model of the Beauties and Pleasures of another World, wherein he had placed whatsoever might contribute to the felicity of a Rational, and Animal Life, the Life of a Creature compos'd of Mire and Dust, of Sense and Reason\*: Besides the other Delicacies consign'd in that place to the use of Man, there was a Tree of Life provided to maintain his Being, and nothing denied in the whole compass of that Territory but one Tree, that of the knowledge of Good and Evil, which was no Mark of an ill will in his Creator to him, but a Reserve of Gods absolute Sovereignty, and a Trial of Mans voluntary Obedience. What blur was it to the Goodness of God, to reserve one Tree for his own propriety, when he had given to Man in all the rest such numerous Marks of his Rich Bounty and Goodness? VVhat *Israel* after Mans Fall enjoyed sensibly, *Nehemiah* calls *great Goodness* †. How inexpressible then was that Goodness manifested to Innocent Man, when so small a part of it indulg'd to the *Israelites* after the Curse upon the Ground, is call'd, as truly it Merits, such great Goodness? How can we pass through any part of this great City, and cast our Eyes upon the well Furnish'd Shops, stor'd with all kinds of Commodities, without reflections upon this Goodness of God, starting up before our Eyes in such varieties, and plainly telling us, that he hath accommodated all things for our use, suited things both to supply our need, content a reasonable Curiosity, and delight us in our aims at, and passage to our Supream End?

3. *The Goodness of God appears in the Laws he hath given to Man, the Covenant he made with him.* It had not been agreeable to the Goodness of God,  
to



to let a Creature governable by a Law, be without a Law to regulate him; his Goodness then which had broke forth in the Creation, had suffer'd an Eclipse and obscurity in his Government. As Infinite Goodness was the Motive to Create, so Infinite Goodness was the Motive of his Government. And this appears;

1. *In the fitting the Law to the Nature of Man.* It was rather below than above his strength; he had an integrity in his Nature to answer the Righteousness of the Precept. \* God Created *Man upright*; his Nature was suited to the Law, and the Law to his Nature; it was not above his understanding to know it, nor his will to embrace it, nor his passions to be regulated by it: The Law and his Nature were like two exact straight Lines, touching one another in every part when joyned together: God exacted no more by his Law, than what was written by Nature in his Heart: He had a knowledge by Creation to observe the Law of his Creation, and he fell not for want of a Righteousness in his Nature: He was enabled for more than was commanded him, but wilfully indisposed to less than he was able to perform. The Precepts were easie, not only becoming the Authority of a Sovereign to exact, but the Goodness of a Father to demand, and the Ingenuity of a Creature and a Son to pay. † *His Commands are not grievous*; the observance of them had fill'd the Spirit of Man with an extraordinary Contentment. It had been no less a pleasure and a delightful satisfaction to have kept the Law in a Created State, than it is to keep it in some measure in a Renew'd State: The Renewed Nature finds a suitableness in the Law to kindle a *delight* \*: \* Eccles. 7. 29. † 1 John 5. 3. \* Psal. 1. 2. It could not then have anywise shook the Nature of an upright Creature, nor have been a burden too heavy for his Shoulders to bear. Though he had not a Grace given him above Nature, yet he had not a Law given him that surmounted his Nature: It did not exceed his Created strength, and was suited to the Dignity and Nobility of a Rational Nature: It was a *just Law*, † and therefore not above the Nature of the Subject that was bound to obey it. And had it been impossible to be observed, it had been unrighteous to be Enacted: It had not been a matter of Divine Praise, and that seven times a day; as it is, \* *Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy Righteous Judgments.* † Rom. 7. 12. \* Psal. 119. 164. The Law was so Righteous, that *Adam* had every whit as much reason to bless God in his Innocence for the Righteousness of it, as *David* had with the Reliques of Enmity against it: His Goodness shines so much in his Law, as merits our Praise of him, as he is a Sovereign Law-giver, as well as a Gracious Benefactor in the imparting to us a Being.

2. *In fitting it for the Happiness of Man.* For the satisfaction of his Soul, which finds a *Reward* in the very act of *keeping* it, † *Great peace* in the *loving* it; for the preservation of Human Society, wherein consists the External felicity of Man. It had been inconsistent with Divine Goodness, to enjoyn Man any thing that should be oppressive and uncomfortable. Bitterness cannot come from that which is altogether Sweet: Goodness would not have oblig'd the Creature to any thing, but what is not only free from damaging him, but wholly conducing to his VVelfare, and Perfective of his Nature. Infinite Wisdom could not order any thing, but what was agreeable to Infinite Goodness. As his Laws are the most Rational, as being the contrivance of Infinite Wisdom: so they are the best, as being the Fruit of Infinite Goodness. His Laws are not only the acts of his Sovereign Authority, but the Effluxes of his Loving-Kindness, and the Conductors of Man to an enjoyment of a greater Bounty: He minds as well the promotion of his Creatures Felicity, as the asserting his own Authority: As good Princes make Laws for their Subjects benefit, as well as their own honour. What was said of a more difficult and burdensom Law long after Mans fall, may much more be said of the easie Law of Nature in the state of Mans Innocence, that it was *for our good* \*. He never pleaded with the *Israelites* for the observation of his



Commands upon the account of his Authority, so much as upon the score of their benefit by them. \*

† Deut. 4. 40.

\* Deut. 12.

28.

† Elishah 48.

18.

And when his Precepts were broken, he seems sometimes to be more griev'd for Mens impairing their own felicity by it, than for their violating his Authority; † *Oh that thou hadst hearken'd to my Commandments, then had thy Peace been as a River!* Goodness cannot prescribe a thing prejudicial: whatsoever it enjoyns, is beneficial to the Spiritual and Eternal Happiness of the Rational Creature: This was both the design of the Law given, and the end of the Law. Christ in his Answer to the Young mans Question, refers him to the Moral Law, (which was the Law of Nature in Adam) as that whereby Eternal Life was to be gained: Which evidenceth, that when the Law was first given as the Covenant of VVorks, it was for the happiness of Man; and the end of giving it was, that Man might have Eternal Life by it: There wouldellse be no strength or truth in that Answer of Christ to that Ruler. And therefore Stephen calls the Law given by Moses, which was the same with the Law of Nature in Adam, \* *The living Oracles*: He enjoyned Mens Services to them not simply for his own Glory, but his Glory in Mens VVelfare: As if there were any Being better than himself, his Goodness and Righteousness would guide him to love that better than himself; because it is Good and Righteous to love that best which is most amiable: So if there were any that could do us more good, and shour down more happiness upon us than himself, he would be content we should obey that as Sovereign, and Steer our Course according to his Laws: *If God be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him*: If the observance of the Precepts of Baal be more beneficial to you; If you can advance your Nature by his Service, and gain a more mighty Crown of Happiness than by mine, follow him with all my heart: I never intended to enjoin you any thing to impair, but increase your Happiness. The chief design of God in his Law, is the Happiness of the Subject; and Obedience is intended by him, as a means for the attaining of Happiness, as well as preserving his own Sovereignty: This is the reason why he wished that *Israel* had walked in his ways, *that their time might have endured for ever*, Psal. 81. 13, 15, 16. And by the same reason, this was his intendment in his Law given to Man, and his Covenant made with Man at the Creation, that he might be fed with the finest part of his Bounty, and be satisfied with Honey out of the Eternal Rock of Ages. To Paraphrase his Expression there. The Goodness of God appears further;

\* Acts 7. 38.

† 1 Kings 18.

21.

3. *In engaging Man to Obedience by Promises and Threatnings.* A Threatning is only mentioned, Gen. 2. 17. but a Promise is implied: If Eternal Death were fixed for Transgression, Eternal Life was thereby design'd for Obedience: And that it was so, the Answer of Christ to the Ruler evidenceth, that the first intendment of the Precept was the Eternal Life of the Subject, order'd to obey it.

1. *God might have acted, in settling his Law only as a Sovereign.* Though he might have dealt with Man upon the score of his absolute Dominion over him as his Creature, and signified his pleasure upon the right of his Sovereignty, threatening only a Penalty if Man transgressed, without the promising a bountiful acknowledgment of his Obedience by a Reward as a Benefactor: yet he would treat with Man in gentle Methods, and Rule him in a tract of Sweetness as well as Sovereignty; He would preserve the rights of his Dominion in the Authority of his Commands, and honour the condescensions of his Goodness in the allurements of a Promise. He that might have solely demanded a compliance with his Will, would kindly Article with him, to oblige him to observe him out of love to himself as well as Duty to his Creator; that he might have both the interest of avoiding the Threatned Evil to affright him, and the interest of attaining the promised Good to allure him to Obedience. How doth he value the Title of Benefactor above that of a Lord!



Lord ! when he so kindly Sollicites, as well as Commands, and engageth to Reward that Obedience which he might have absolutely claim'd as his due, by enforcing fears of the severest Penalty. His Sovereignty seems to stoop below it self for the elevation of his *Goodness* ; and he is pleas'd to have his Kindness more taken notice of than his Authority. Nothing imported more condescension than his bringing forth his Law in the Nature of a Covenant, whereby he seems to humble himself, and vail his Superiority to treat with Man as his equal, that the very manner of his Treatment might oblige him in the richest Promises he made to draw him, and the startling Threatnings he pronounced to link him to his Obedience : And therefore is it observable, that when after the Transgression of *Adam* God comes to deal with him, he doth not do it in that thundring Rigor, which might have been expected from an enrag'd Sovereign, but in a gentle Examination, \* *Hast thou eaten of the Tree whereof I commanded thee, that thou shouldst not eat ?* To the Woman, he said no more than, *What is this that thou hast done ?* And in the Scripture we find, when he cites the *Israelites* before him for their Sin, he Expostulates with them not so much upon the absolute right he had to challenge their Obedience, as upon the equity and reasonableness of his Law, which they had transgress'd : That by the same Argument of *sweetness* wherewith he would attract them to their Duty, he might shame them after their Offence †.\*

\* Gen. 3. 11.  
13.

† Isaiah 1. 2.  
\* Ezek. 18. 25.

2. By the Threatnings he manifests his Goodness as well as by his Promises. He Promises that he might be a Rewarder, and Threatens that he might not be a Punisher ; the one is to elevate our *hope*, and the other to excite our *fear*, the two Passions whereby the Nature of Man is manag'd in the World. He imprints upon Man Sentiments of a Misery by Sin in his thundring Commination, that he might engage him the more to embrace and be guided by the Motives of Sweetness in his gracious Promises. The design of them was to preserve Man in his due bounds, that God might not have occasion to blow upon him the Flames of his Justice ; to suppress those irregular Passions, which the Nature of Man (though Created without any disorder) was capable of entertaining upon the appearance of suitable Objects ; and to keep the Waves from swelling upon any turning Wind, that so Man being modest in the use of the Goodness God had allowed him, might still be capable of fresh streams of Divine Bounty, without ever falling under his Righteous Wrath for any Transgression. What a prospect of Goodness is in this proceeding, to disclose Mans Happiness to be as durable as his Innocence ; and set before a Rational Creature the extreamest Misery due to his Crime, to affright him from neglecting his Creator, and making unworthy Returns to his Goodness ? What could be done more by Goodness to suit that passion of fear which was implanted in the Nature of Man, than to assure him he should not degenerate from the Righteousness of his Nature, and violate the Authority of his Creator, without falling from his own Happiness, and sinking into the most deplorable Calamity ?

3. The Reward he promised, manifests yet further his Goodness to Man. It was his Goodness to intend a Reward to Man : No necessity could oblige God to Reward Man, had he continued obedient in his Created State : For in all Rewards which are truly Merited, besides some kind of equality to be consider'd between the Person doing Service, and the Person Rewarding, and also between the Act performed, and the Reward bestow'd, there must also be consider'd the condition of the Person doing the Service, that he is not oblig'd to do it as a Duty, but is at his own choice whether to offer it or no : But Man being wholly dependent on God in his Being and Preservation, having nothing of his own, but what he had receiv'd from the hands of Divine Bounty, † his Service was due by the strongest Obligation to God : But there was no natural Engagement on God to return a Reward to him ; for Man could return nothing of his own, but that only which he had received from

† 1 Cor. 4. 7.



from his Creator : It must be pure Goodness that gives a gracious Reward for a due Debt, to receive his own from Man, and return more than he had received. A Divine Reward doth far surmount the value of a Rational Service.

\* Amyral.  
Dissertat. p.  
637, 638.

It was therefore a mighty Goodness to stipulate with Man, that upon his Obedience he should enjoy an Immortality in that Nature. \* The Article on Mans part was Obedience, which was necessarily just, and founded in the Nature of Man : He had been unjust, ungrateful, and violated all Laws of Righteousness, had he committed any act unworthy of one that had been so great a Subject of Divine Liberality : But the Article on Gods part of giving a perpetual Blessedness to Innocent Man, was not founded upon Rules of strict Justice and Righteousness, for that would have argu'd God to be a Debtor to Man ; but that God cannot be to the Work of his hands, that had receiv'd the Materials of his Being and Acting from him, as the Vessel doth from the Potter. But this was founded only on the Goodness of the Divine Nature, whereby he cannot but be kind to an innocent and holy Creature. The Nature of God enclin'd him to it by the Rules of Goodness, but the Service of Man could not claim it by the Rules of Justice without a Stipulation : So that the Covenant whereby God oblig'd himself to continue the Happiness of Man upon the continuance of his Obedience, in the Original of it, springs from pure Goodness, though the performance of it upon the fulfilling Condition requir'd in the Creature, was founded upon the Rules of Righteousness and Truth, after Divine Goodness had brought it forth.

† 1 Cor. 5. 1,  
3.

God did Create Man for a Reward and Happiness : Now Gods implanting in the Nature of Man a desire after Happiness, and some higher Happiness than he had in Creation invested him in, doth evidence that God did not Create Man only for his own Service, but for his attaining a greater Happiness. All Rational Creatures are possessed with a Principle of seeking after Good, the highest Good, and God did not plant in Man this Principle in vain ; It had not been Goodness to put this Principle in Man, if he had design'd never to bestow a Happiness on Man for his Obedience ; This had been Repugnant to the Goodness and Wisdom of God ; And the Scripture doth very Emphatically express, the Felicity of Man to be the design of God in the first forming him and moulding him a Creature, as well as working him a new Creature, † *He that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God* : He framed this Earthly Tabernacle for a Residence in an Eternal Habitation, and a better Habitation than an Earthly Paradise. What we expect in the Resurrection, that very same thing God did in Creation intend us for ; but since the Corruption of our Natures, we must undergo a dissolution of our Bodies, and may have just reason of a despondency, since Sin hath seem'd to change the course of Gods Bounty, and brought us under a Curse. He hath given us the Earnest of his Spirit, as an assurance that he will perform that very self same thing, the conferring that Happiness upon renewed Creatures for which he first form'd Man in Creation, when he compacted his Earthly Tabernacle of the dust of the Ground, and rear'd it up before him.

\* Gen. 2. 17.

4. *It was a mighty Goodness that God should give Man an Eternal Reward.* That an Eternity of Reward was promised, is implied in the Death that was threatned upon Transgression : Whatsoever you conceive the threatned Death to be, either for Nature, or duration upon Transgression ; of the same Nature and duration you must suppose the life to be, which is implied upon his constancy in his Integrity. As Sin would render him an Eternal Object of Gods hatred, so his Obedience would render him an Eternally amiable Object to his Creator, as the standing Angels are preserved and confirmed in an intire Felicity and Glory. Though the threatning be only express'd by God, \* yet the other is implied, and might easily be concluded from it by Adam. And one reason why God only express'd the Threatning, and not the Promise, was, be-  
cause



cause man might collect some hopes and expectations of a perpetual Happiness from that Image of God which he beheld in himself, and from the large Provision he had made for him in the World, and the Commission given him to Increase and Multiply, and to Rule as a Lord over his other Works ; whereas he could not so easily have imagined himself capable of being expos'd to such an extraordinary Calamity as an Eternal Death, without some signification of it from God. 'Tis easily concludable, that Eternal Life was supposed to be promised, to be conferr'd upon him if he stood, as well as Eternal Death to be inflicted on him if he Rebell'd \*. Now this Eternal Life was not due to his Nature, but it was a pure Beam, and Gift of Divine Goodness : For there was no proportion between Mans Service in his Innocent Estate, and a Reward so great both for Nature and duration : It was a higher Reward than can be imagined either due to the Nature of Man, or upon any Natural Right claimable by his Obedience. All that could be expected by him, was but a Natural Happiness, not a Supernatural : As there was no necessity upon the account of Natural Righteousness, so there was no necessity upon the account of the Goodness of God to elevate the Nature of Man to a Supernatural Happiness, meerly because he Created him : For though it be necessary for God, when he would Create, in regard of his Wisdom, to Create for some End, yet it was not necessary that End should be a Supernatural End and Happiness, since a Natural Blessedness had been sufficient for Man. And though God in Creating Angels and Men intellectual and Rational Creatures, did make them necessary for himself and his own Glory, yet it was not necessarily for him to order either Angels or Men to such a Felicity as consists in a clear Vision, and so high a Fruition of himself : for all other things are made by him for himself, and yet not for the Vision of himself. God might have Created Man only for a Natural Happiness, according to the Perfection of his Natural Faculties, and had dealt Bountifully with him, if he had never intended him a Supernatural Blessedness, and an Eternal Recompence : But what a largeness of Goodness is here, to design Man in his Creation for so rich a Blessedness as an Eternal Life, with the Fruition of himself ? He hath not only given to Man all things which are necessary, but design'd for Man that which the poor Creature could not imagine : He garnisht the Earth for him, and garnisht him for an Eternal Felicity, had he not by slighting the Goodness of God stript himself of the present, and forfeited his future Blessedness.

\* Suarez, de  
Gratia Fol. 2.  
p. 125, 127.

2. *The second thing is the manifestation of this Goodness in Redemption.* The whole Gospel is nothing but one entire Mirror of Divine Goodness : The whole of Redemption is wrapt up in that one Expression of the Angels Song, *Luke 2. 14. Good will towards Man.* The Angels Sang but one Song before, which is upon Record, but the Matter of it seems to be the Wisdom of God chiefly in Creation. *Job 38. 7. compar. 9. v. 5, 6, 8, 9.* The Angels are there meant by the *Morning Stars* ; The visible Stars of Heaven were not distinctly form'd, when the Foundations of the Earth were laid : And the Title of the Sons of God verifies it, since none but Creatures of understanding are dignifi'd in Scripture with that Title. There they Celebrate his Wisdom in Creation ; here his *Goodness in Redemption*, which is the intire Matter of the Song.

1. *Goodness was the Spring of Redemption.* All and every part of it owes only to this Perfection the appearance of it in the World. This only excited Wisdom to bring forth from so great an Evil as the Apostacy of Man, so great a Good as the Recovery of him. When Man fell from his Created Goodness, God would evidence that he could not fall from his Infinite Goodness : That the greatest Evil could not surmount the ability of his Wisdom to contrive, nor the Riches of his Bounty to present us a Remedy for it. Divine Goodness would not stand by a Spectator, without being Reliever of that Misery Man had plung'd himself into ; but by astonishing Methods it would



would recover him to Happiness, who had wrested himself out of his hands, to fling himself into the most deplorable Calamity : And it was the greater, since it surmounted those Natural Inclinations, and those strong Provocations, which he had to shower down the Power of his Wrath. What could be the Source of such a Procedure, but this Excellency of the Divine Nature ; Since no Violence could force him, nor was there any Merit to persuade to such a Restoration ? This under the name of his Love, is render'd the sole cause of the Redeeming Death of the Son : It was to commend his Love with the highest Gloss, and in so singular a manner that had not its parallel in Nature, nor in all his other Works, and reaches in the brightness of it beyond the manifested extent of any other Attribute \*. It must be only a miraculous Goodness that induced him to expose the Life of his Son to those difficulties in the World, and Death upon the Cross for the freedom of sordid Rebels : His great End was to give such a demonstration of the liberality of his Nature, as might be attractive to his Creature, remove its shakings and tremblings, and encourage its approaches to him. 'Tis in this he would not only manifest his Love, but assume the name of Love. By this Name the Holy Ghost calls him in relation to this good will manifested in his Son, † *God is love. In this is manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him.* He would take the Name he never express'd himself in before. He was *Jehovah* in regard of the truth of his Promise ; so he would be known of old : He is Goodness in regard of the grandeur of his Affection in the Mission of his Son : And therefore he would be known by the Name of Love now in the days of the Gospel.

\* Rom. 5. 8.

† 1 John 4. 8. 9.

\* Rada Controvers. Part. 3. p. 363.

† 1 Tim. 1. 11.

2. *It was a Pure Goodness.* He was under no obligation to pity our Misery, and repair our Ruines : He might have stood to the terms of the first Covenant, and exacted our Eternal Death, since we had committed an infinite Transgression : He was under no tie to put off the Robes of a Judge for the Bowels of a Father, and erect a Mercy-seat above his Tribunal of Justice \*. The reparation of Man had no necessary connexion with his Creation ; It follows not, that because Goodness had extracted us from nothing by a mighty Power, that it must lift us out of wilful Misery by a mighty Grace. Certainly that God who had no need of Creating us, had far less need of Redeeming us : For since he Created one World, he could have as easily destroyed it and rear'd another. It had not been unbecoming the Divine Goodness or Wisdom, to have let Man perpetually wallow in that Sink wherein he had plung'd himself, since he was Criminal by his own will, and therefore Miserable by his own fault : Nothing could necessitate this Reparation. If Divine Goodness could not be obliged by the Angelical Dignity to repair that Nature, he is further from any Obligation by the means of Man to repair Humane Nature. There was less necessity to restore Man, than to restore the fallen Angels : What could Man do to oblige God to a Reparation of him, since he could not render him a Recompence for his Goodness manifested in his Creation ? He must be much more impotent to render him a Debtor for the Redemption of him from Misery. Could it be a salary for any thing we had done : Alas ! we are so far from Meriting it, that by our daily Demerits, we seem ambitious to put a stop to any further Effusions of it : We could not have complain'd of him, if he had left us in the Misery we had courted, since he was bound by no Law to bestow upon us the Recovery we wanted. When the *Apostle* speaks of the Gospel of *Redemption*, he giveth it the Title of *the Gospel of the Blessed God* †. It was the Gospel of a God abounding in his own Blessedness, which receiv'd no addition by Mans Redemption ; If he had been blessed by it, it had been a goodness to himself, as well as to the Creature : It was not an Indigent Goodness needing the receiving any thing from us ; but it was a pure Goodness, streaming out of it self, without bringing any thing into it self for the Perfection of it : There was no Goodness in



us to be the Motive of his Love, but his Goodness was the Fountain of our Benefit.

3. *It was a distinct Goodness of the whole Trinity.* In the Creation of Man we find a general Consultation, \* without those distinct Labours and Offices of each Person; and without those rais'd Expressions and Marks of Joy and Triumph as at Mans Restoration. In this there are distinct Functions: The Grace of the *Father*, the Merit of the *Son*, and the Efficacy of the *Spirit*; The *Father* makes the Promise of Redemption, the *Son* Seals it with his Blood, and the *Spirit* applies it; The *Father* Adopts us to be his Children, the *Son* Redeems us to be his Members, and the *Spirit* Renews us to be his Temples. In this the *Father* testifies himself well pleased in a Voice; The *Son* proclaims his own delight to do the will of God; and the *Spirit* hastens with the Wing of a Dove, to fit him for his work; And afterwards in his apparition in the likeness of Fiery Tongues, manifests his zeal for the propagation of the Redeeming Gospel.

4. *The Effects of it proclaim his great Goodness.* 'Tis by this we are deliver'd from the Corruption of our Nature, the Ruine of our Happiness, the deformity of our Sins, and the punishment of our Transgressions: He frees us from the Ignorance wherewith we were darkned, and from the Slavery wherein we were fetter'd. When he came to make *Adams* Process after his Crime, instead of pronouncing the Sentence of Death he had merited, he utters a Promise that Man could not have expected: His Kindness swells above his provoked Justice, and while he chaseth him out of Paradise, he gives him hopes of regaining the same or a better Habitation; and is in the whole, more ready to prevent him with the *Blissings of his Goodness*, than charge him with the horror of his Crimes †: 'Tis a Goodness that pardons us more Transgressions than there are Moments in our Lives; and overlooks as many Follies as there are Thoughts in our Heart: He doth not only relieve our wants, but restores us to our Dignity. 'Tis a greater Testimony of Goodness to instate a Person in the highest Honour, than barely to supply his present Necessity; 'Tis an admirable Pity, whereby he was inclin'd to Redeem us, and an incomparable Affection whereby he was resolv'd to exalt us. What can be desir'd more of him than his Goodness hath granted? He hath sought us out when we were lost, and Ransom'd us when we were Captives: He hath Pardon'd us when we were Condemn'd, and rais'd us when we were Dead. In Creation he rear'd us from nothing, in *Redemption* he delivers our Understanding from ignorance and vanity, and our Wills from impotence and obstinacy, and our whole Man from a Death worse than that nothing he drew us from by Creation.

5. Hence we may consider the *height of this Goodness in Redemption to exceed that in Creation.* He gave Man a Being in Creation, but did not draw him from unexpressible Misery by that act. His liberality in the Gospel doth infinitely surpass what we admire in the Works of Nature: His Goodness in the latter is more astonishing to our belief, than his Goodness in Creation is visible to our Eye. There is more of his Bounty express'd in that one *Verse*, (\* So God loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son.) than there is in the whole Volume of the World: 'Tis an incomprehensible *so*; a *so*, that all the Angels in Heaven cannot Analyze, and few Comment upon, or understand the dimensions of this *so*. In *Creation* he form'd an Innocent Creature of the Dust of the Ground; in *Redemption* he restores a Rebellious Creature by the Blood of his Son: It is greater than that Goodness manifested in Creation.

1. *In regard of the difficulty of effecting it.* In Creation meer nothing was vanquish'd, to bring us into Being; In *Redemption* fullen Enmity was conquer'd



quer'd for the enjoyment of our Restoration ; In Creation he subdued a Nullity to make us Creatures ; In Redemption his Goodness overcomes his Omnipotent Justice to restore us to Felicity ; A word from the Mouth of Goodness inspir'd the Dust of Mens Bodies with a living Soul ; but the Blood of his Son must be shed, and the Laws of Natural Affection seem to be overturn'd, to lay the Foundation of our renew'd Happiness. In the first, Heaven did but speak, and the Earth was form'd ; In the second, Heaven it self must sink to Earth, and be clothed with dusty Earth to reduce Mans Dust to its Original State.

† Psal. 49. 8.

2. This Goodness is greater than that manifested in Creation, *in regard of its Cost*. This was a more expensive Goodness than what was laid out in Creation ; *The redemption of one Soul is pretious\**, much more costly than the whole Fabrick of the World, or as many Worlds as the understandings of Angels in their utmost extent can conceive to be Created : For the effecting of this God parts with his dearest Treasure, and his Son Eclipses his choicest Glory ; For this God must be made Man, Eternity must suffer Death, the Lord of Angels must weep in a Cradle, and the Creator of the World must hang like a Slave ; he must be in a Manger in *Bethlehem*, and die upon a Cross on *Calvary* : Unspotted Righteousness must be made Sin, and unblemisht Blessedness be made a Curse. He was at no other Expence than the Breath of his Mouth to form Man ; the Fruits of the Earth could have maintained Innocent Man without any other Cost ; but his broken Nature cannot be heal'd without the invaluable Medicine of the Blood of God. View Christ in the Womb and in the Manger, in his weary Steps and hungry Bowels, in his Prostrations in the Garden, and in his clodded drops of Bloody Sweat ; View his Head pierced with a Crown of Thorns, and his Face besmeared with the Soldiers Slabber ; View him in his march to *Calvary*, and his Elevation on the painful Cross with his Head hanged down, and his Side streaming Blood ; View him pelted with the Scoffs of the Governours, and the Derisions of the Rabble ; And see in all this, what Cost Goodness was at for Mans Redemption. In *Creation* his Power made the Sun to shine upon us, and in *Redemption* his Bowels sent a Son to die for us.

\* Rom. 9. 2.  
Tit. 2. 14.

3. This Goodness of God in Redemption is greater than that manifested in Creation, *in regard of Mans desert of the contrary*. In the Creation, as there was nothing without him to allure him to the Expressions of his Bounty ; so there was nothing that did damp the Inclinations of his Goodness : The nothing from whence the World was drawn, could never merit, nor demerit a Being, because it was nothing : As there was nothing to engage him, so there was nothing to disoblige him : As his Favour could not be merited, so neither could his Anger be deserved : But in this he finds ingratitude against the former Marks of his Goodness, and Rebellion against the sweetness of his Sovereignty : Crimes unworthy of the dews of Goodness, and worthy of the sharpest strokes of Vengeance : And therefore the Scripture advanceth the honour of it above the Title of meer Goodness, to that of *Grace* † ; because Men were not only unworthy of a Blessing, but worthy of a Curse. An Innocent Nothing more deserves Creation, than a Culpable Creature deserves an exemption from Destruction. When Man fell, and gave occasion to God to repent of his Created Work, his ravishing Goodness surmounted the occasions he had of repenting, and the provocations he had to the destruction of his Frame.

4. *It was a greater Goodness than was express'd towards the Angels.*

1. *A greater Goodness than was express'd towards the standing Angels.* The Son of God did no more expose his Life for the confirmation of those that stood, than for the restoration of those that fell : The Death of Christ was not



not for the holy Angels, but for sinful Man ; They needed the Grace of God to confirm them, but not the Death of Christ to restore or preserve them ; They had a beloved Holiness to be established by the powerful Grace of God, but not any abominable Sin to be expiated and blotted out by the Blood of God ; They had no Debt to pay but that of Obedience ; but we had both a Debt of Obedience to the Precepts, and a Debt of Suffering to the Penalty after the Fall. Whether the holy Angels were confirm'd by Christ, or no, is a *question* : some think they were, from *Colos. 1. 20.* where *things in Heaven* are said to be *reconcil'd* ; but some think that place signifies no more than the Reconciliation of things in Heaven, if meant of the Angels, to things on Earth, with whom they were at enmity in the Cause of their Sovereign ; or the Reconciliation of things in Heaven to God, is meant the glorified Saints who were once in a State of Sin, and whom the Death of Christ upon the Cross reached, though dead long before. But if *Angels* were confirm'd by Christ, it was by him not as a slain Sacrifice, but as the Sovereign head of the whole Creation, appointed by God to gather all things into one, which some think to be the intendment of, *Ephes. 1. 10.* where all things, as well those in Heaven, as those in Earth are said to be *gathered together in one in Christ*. Where is a syllable in Scripture of his being Crucified for Angels, but only for Sinners ? Not for the Confirmation of the one, but the Reconciliation of the other ; So that the Goodness whereby God continued those Blessed Spirits in Heaven through the effusions of his Grace, is a small thing to the restoring us to our forfeited Happiness through the Streams of Divine Blood. The preserving a Man in life, is a little thing and a smaller benefit than the raising a Man from Death. The rescuing a Man from an ignominious Punishment lays a greater obligation, than barely to prevent him from committing a capital Crime. The preserving a Man standing upon the top of a steep Hill is more easie, than to bring a Crippled and Tiffical Man from the bottom to the top. The continuance God gave to the Angels, is not so signal a Mark of Goodness, as the deliverance he gave to us, since they were not sunk into Sin, nor by any Crime fallen into Misery.

2. *His Goodness in Redemption is greater than any Goodness expressed to the Fallen Angels.* 'Tis the wonder of his Goodness to us, that he was mindful of Fall'n Man, and careless of Fall'n Angels ; That he should visit Man, wallowing in Death and Blood with the Day-spring from on high, and never turn the *Aegyptian* darkness of Devils into a chearful day ; When they Sinn'd Divine Thunder dasht them into Hell ; When Man Sinn'd Divine Blood wafts the Fallen Creature from his Misery : The Angels wallow in their own Blood for ever, while Christ is made partaker of our Blood, and wallows in his Blood, that we might not for ever corrupt in ours ; They tumbled down from Heaven, and Divine Goodness would not vouchsafe to catch them : Man tumbles down, and Divine Goodness holds out a hand drencht in the Blood of him, that was from the Foundations of the World, to lift us up, *Heb. 2. 16.* He spared not those dignified Spirits, when they Revolted ; and spared not punishing his Son for dusty Man, when he offended ; when he might as well for ever have let Man lie in the Chains wherein he had intangled himself, as them. We were as fit Objects of Justice as they, and they as fit Objects of Goodness as we : they were not more wretched by their Fall than we, and the poverty of our Nature rendred us more unable to recover our selves, than the dignity of theirs did them ; They were his *Reuben* his first born, they were his Might and the beginning of his Strength, yet those Elder Sons he neglected to prefer the Younger ; They were the Prime and Golden Pieces of Creation, not laden with gross Matter, yet they lie under the Ruines of their Fall, while Man, Lead in comparifon of them, is refin'd for another World.



They seem'd to be fitter Objects of Divine Goodness in regard of the eminency of their Nature above the Humane : One Angel excelled in Endowments of Mind and Spirit, vastness of Understanding, greatness of Power, all the Sons of Men ; they were more capable to praise him, more capable to serve him, and because of the Acuteness of their Comprehension more able to have a due Estimate of such a Redemption, had it been afforded them ; yet that Goodness which had Created them so Comely, would not lay it self out in restoring the Beauty they had defaced. The Promise was of bruising the Serpents head for us, not of lifting up the Serpents head with us ; Their Nature was not assum'd, nor any command given them to believe or repent : Not one Devil spar'd, not one Apostate Spirit recover'd, not one of those eminent Creatures restor'd ; Every one of them hath only a prospect of Misery without any glimpse of Recovery : They were ruin'd under one Sin, and we repair'd under many. All his Redeeming Goodness was laid out upon Man, *Psal. 144. 3. What is Man that thou takest knowledge of him, and the Son of Man that thou makest account of him ?* Making account of him above Angels ; As they fell without any tempting them, so God would leave them to rise without any assisting them. I know the Schools trouble themselves to find out the reasons of this peculiarity of Grace to Man, and not to them ; because the whole Humane Nature fell, but only a part of the Angelical ; The one Sinned by a Seduction, and the other by a fullness without any Tempter : Every Angel Sinned by his own proper will, whereas *Adams* Posterity Sinned by the will of the first Man, the common Root of all. God would deprive the Devil of any glory in the satisfaction of his envious desire to hinder Man from attainment and possession of that Happiness which himself had lost. The weakness of Man below the Angelical Nature might excite the Divine Mercy : And since all the things of the lower World were Created for Man, God would not lose the honour of his Works, by losing the immediate End for which he framed them. And finally because in the Restoration of Angels, there would have been only a Restoration of one Nature that was not comprehensive of the Nature of Inferior things : But after all such Conjectures Man must sit down, and acknowledge Divine Goodness to be the only Spring without any other Motive. Since Infinite Wisdom could have contrived a way for Redemption for Fallen Angels, as well as for Fallen Man, and restor'd both the one and the other ; Why might not Christ have assumed their Nature as well as ours into the unity of the Divine Person, and suffer'd the Wrath of God in their Nature for them, as well as in his Humane Soul for us ? 'Tis as conceivable that two Natures might have been assum'd by the Son of God, as well as three Souls be in Man distinct, as some think there are.

3. To Enhance this Goodness yet higher ; *It was a greater Goodness to us, than was for a time manifested to Christ himself.* To demonstrate his Goodness to Man in preventing his Eternal Ruine, he would for a while withhold his Goodness from his Son, by exposing his Life as the price of our Ransom ; not only subjecting him to the Derisions of Enemies, Desertions of Friends, and Malice of Devils, but to the unexpressible bitterness of his own Wrath in his Soul, as made an offering for Sin.

The Particle *so*, *John 3. 16.* seems to intimate this Supremacy of Goodness : *He so loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son.* He so loved the World, that he seem'd for a time not to love his Son in comparison of it, or equal with it. The Person to whom a Gift is given, is in that regard accounted more valuable than the Gift or Present made to him : Thus God valued our Redemption above the worldly Happiness of the Redeemer, and sentenceth him to an Humiliation on Earth, in order to our Exaltation in Heaven : He was desirous to hear him groaning, and see him bleeding, that we might not groan under his Frowns, and bleed under his Wrath : He spared



spared not him, that he might spare us; refused not to strike him, that he might be well pleased with us; drencht his Sword in the Blood of his Son, that it might not for ever be wet with ours; but that his Goodness might for ever triumph in our Salvation: He was willing to have his Son made Man, and die, rather than Man should perish, who had delighted to ruine himself; He seem'd to degrade him for a time from what he was\*. But since he could not be united to any but to an intellectual Creature, he could not be united to any viler and more sordid Creature than the Earthly Nature of Man. And when this Son in our Nature prayed, that the Cup might pass from him, Goodness would not suffer it, to shew how it valued the manifestation of it self in the Salvation of Man above the preservation of the Life of so dear a Person.

\* *Ungend de Eucharist*, p. 84. 85.

In particular wherein this Goodness appears;

1. *The first Resolution to Redeem, and the means appointed for Redemption, could have no other inducement but Divine Goodness.* We cannot too highly value the Merit of Christ; but we must not so much extend the Merit of Christ, as to draw a value to Eclipse the Goodness of God: Though we owe our Redemption and the Fruits of it to the Death of Christ, yet we owe not the first Resolutions of Redemption, and assumption of our Nature, the means of Redemption, to the Merit of Christ. Divine Goodness only, without the association of any Merit, not only of Man but of the Redeemer himself, begat the first purpose of our Recovery: He was singled out, and predestinated to be our Redeemer, before he took our Nature to Merit our Redemption. *God sent his Son*, is a frequent Expression in the Gospel of St. John†. To what end did God send Christ, but to Redeem? \* The purpose of Redemption therefore preceded the pitching upon Christ as the means and procuring Cause of it, i. e. of our actual Redemption, but not of the Redeeming purpose; the end is always in intention before the means. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son*; The love of God to the World was first in Intention and the Order of Nature, before the will of giving his Son to the World. His Intention of saving was before the Mission of a Saviour: So that this Affection rose not from the Merit of Christ, but the Merit of Christ was directed by this Affection. It was the Effect of it, not the Cause. Nor was the union of our Nature with his Merited by him; All his Meritorious acts were performed in our Nature: The Nature therefore wherein he performed it, was not Merited; that Grace which was not, could not Merit what it was: He could not Merit that Humanity, which must be assumed before he could Merit any thing for us, because all Merit for us must be offer'd in the Nature which had offended. 'Tis true *Christ gave himself*, but by the order of Divine Goodness; he that begat him pitcht upon him, and call'd him to this great work: † He is therefore call'd *the Lamb of God*, as being set apart by God to be a propitiating and appeasing Sacrifice. He is the *Wisdom of God*, since from the Father he reveals the Counsel and Order of Redemption. In this regard he calls God *his God* in the Prophet, \* and in the Evangelist; † though he was big with affection for the accomplishment, yet he came not to do his *own will*, but the will of Divine Goodness: His own will it was too, but not principally as being the first Wheel in Motion, but subordinate to the eternal will of Divine Bounty. It was by the will of God that he came, and by his will he drank the dreggy Cup of Bitterness. Divine Justice laid upon him *the iniquity of us all*, but Divine Goodness intended it for our Rescue: Divine Goodness singled him out, and set him apart: Divine Goodness invited him to it: Divine Goodness commanded him to effect it, and put a Law into his heart, to bias him in the performing of it: Divine Goodness sent him, and Divine Goodness moved Justice to bruise him; and after his Sacrifice, Divine Goodness accepted him, and carested him for it. So earnest was it for our Redemption, as to give out special and irreversible Orders:

† John 3. 34.  
Joh. 9. 24.  
Joh. 17. 3.  
\* Lessius.

† Heb. 1. 1.

\* Isaiah 49. 4  
† Joh. 20. 17.



ders : Death was commanded to be endured by him for us, and Life com-  
 manded to be imparted by him to us\*. If God had not been the Mover,  
 but had received the proposal from another, he might have heard it, but was  
 not bound to grant it : His Sovereign Authority was not under any obliga-  
 tion to receive anothers Sponfion for the miserable Criminal. As Christ is  
 the head of Man, so *God is the head of Christ* †; He did nothing but by his  
 directions, as he was not a Mediator but by the Constitution of Divine Good-  
 ness. As a *liberal Man deviseth liberal things*\*, so did a bountiful God de-  
 vise a bountiful act, wherein his kindness and love as a Saviour appeared :  
 He was possessed with the resolutions to manifest his Goodness in Christ *in the*  
*beginning of his way* †, before he descended to the act of Creation. This  
 intention of Goodness preceded his making that Creature Man, who he  
 foresaw would fall, and by his fall disjoyn't, and entangle the whole Frame of  
 the World without such a provision.

\* Io'n 1c.  
 19, 19.

† 1 Cor. 11.3.

\* Isaiah 45. 5.

† Prov. 8. 22,  
 23.

2. *In Gods giving Christ to be our Redeemer, he gave the highest gift that it*  
*was possible for Divine Goodness to bestow.* As there is not a greater God than  
 himself to be conceiv'd, so there is not a greater Gift for this great God to  
 present to his Creatures : Never did God go farther in any of his excellent  
 Perfections than this. 'Tis such a Dole that cannot be transcended with a  
 choicer : He is as it were come to the last Mite of his Treasure. And though  
 he could Create Millions of Worlds for us, he cannot give a greater Son to us.  
 He could abound in the expressions of his Power in new Creations of Worlds,  
 which have not yet been seen, and in the lustre of his Wisdom in more  
 stately Structures ; but if he should frame as many Worlds, as there are Mites  
 of Dust and Matter in this, and make every one of them as bright and glori-  
 ous as the Sun ; Though his Power and Wisdom would be more signalized,  
 yet his Goodness could not, since he hath not a choicer Gift to bless those  
 brighter Worlds withall, than he hath conferr'd upon this. Nor can Im-  
 menfe Goodness contrive a richer means to conduct those Worlds to Happi-  
 ness, than he hath both invented for this World, and presented it with. It  
 cannot be imagin'd, that it can extend it self farther, than to give a Gift equal  
 with himself ; a Gift as dear to him as himself. His Wisdom, had it studied  
 millions of Eternities, (excuse the Expression, since Eternity admits of no  
 Millions, it being an interminable duration) it could have found out no more  
 to give, this Goodness could have bestow'd no more, and our necessity could  
 not have requir'd a greater offering for our relief. When God intended in  
 Redemption the manifestation of his highest Goodness, it could not be with-  
 out the Donation of the choicest Gift. As when he would ensure our Com-  
 fort, he swears *by himself*, because he cannot swear *by a greater*\* : So when  
 he would ensure our Happiness, he gives us his Son, because he cannot give  
 a greater, being equal with himself. Had the Father given himself in Per-  
 son, he had given one first in order, but not greater in Essence and glorious  
 Perfections : It could have been no more than the life of God, that should then  
 have been laid down for us ; and so it was now, since the Humane Nature did  
 not subsist but in his Divine Person.

\* Heb. 6. 13.

† Heb. 1. 3.

1. *'Tis a greater Gift than Worlds, or all things purchased by him.* What  
 was this Gift but *the Image of his Person, and the brightness of his Glory* † ?  
 What was this Gift, but one as rich as Eternal Blessedness could make him ?  
 What was this Gift, but one that possessed the fulness of Earth, and the  
 more Immenfe Riches of Heaven ? 'Tis a more valuable Present, than if he  
 presented us with thousands of Worlds of Angels and inferior Creatures, be-  
 cause his Person is incomparably greater, not only than all conceivable, but  
 inconceivable Creations : We are more obliged to him for it, than if he had  
 made us Angels of the highest Rank in Heaven, because it is a Gift of more  
 value than the whole Angelical Nature, because he is an infinite Person ; and there-



therefore infinitely transcends whatsoever is finite, though of the highest Dignity. The Wounds of an Almighty God for us are a greater Testimony of Goodness, than if we had all the other Riches of Heaven and Earth. This Perfection had not appeared in such an astonishing grandeur, had it pardon'd us without so rich a satisfaction; that had been pardon to our Sin, not a God of our Nature. *God so loved the World that he pardon'd it*, had not founded so great and so good, as God so loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son. *Est aliquid in Christo formosius Servatore*. There is something in Christ more Excellent and Comely than the Office of a Saviour; the greatness of his Person is more Excellent, than the Salvation procured by his Death: It was a greater Gift than was bestow'd upon innocent Adam, or the holy Angels. In the Creation, his Goodness gave us Creatures for our use: In our Redemption, his Goodness gives us what was dearest to him for our Service; our Sovereign in Office to benefit us, as well as in a Royalty to govern us.

2. *It was a greater Gift, because it was his own Son.* Not an Angel. It had been a mighty Goodness to have given one of the lofty Seraphims; A greater Goodness to have given the whole Corporation of those glorious Spirits for us; those Children of the most high: But he gave that Son, whom he commands all the Angels to Worship\*, and all Men to adore, and pay the lowest Homage to†; that Son that is to be honoured by us, as we honour the Father\*; that Son which was his delight; his delights in the Hebrew, wherein all the delights of the Father were gathered in one, as well as of the whole Creation; and not simply a Son, but an only begotten Son, upon which Christ lays the stress with an Emphasis†. He had but one Son in Heaven or Earth, one Son from an unviewable Eternity, and that one Son he gave for a degenerate World; this Son he Consecrated for evermore a Priest\*. The word of the Oath makes the Son; The peculiarity of his Sonship heightens the Goodness of the Donor. It was no meaner a Person that he gave to empty himself of his glory, to fulfil an obedience for us, that we might be rendred happy partakers of the Divine Nature. Those that know the natural affection of a Father to a Son, must judge the affection of God the Father to the Son infinitely greater, than the affection of an Earthly Father to the Son of his Bowels. It must be an unparallel'd Goodness, to give up a Son that he loved with so ardent an Affection for the Redemption of Rebels: Abandon a glorious Son to a dishonourable Death for the security of those that had violated the Laws of Righteousness, and endeavoured to pull the Sovereign Crown from his head. Besides, being an only Son, all those Affections center'd in him, which in Parents would have been divided among a multitude of Children: So then, as it was a Testimony of the highest Faith and Obedience in Abraham to offer up his only begotten Son to God†; So it was the Triumph of Divine Goodness, to give so great, so dear a Person for so little a thing as Man; and for such a piece of nothing and vanity, as a Sinful World.

3. *And this Son given to Rescue us by his Death.* It was a gift to us; For our sakes he descended from his Throne, and dwelt on Earth; For our sakes he was made Flesh, and infirm Flesh; For our sakes he was made a Curse, and scorcht in the Furnace of his Fathers Wrath; For our sakes he went naked, arm'd only with his own Strength into the Lists of that Combat with the Devils, that led us Captive. Had he given him to be a Leader for the conquest of some Earthly Enemies, it had been a great Goodness to display his Banners, and bring us under his Conduct; but he sent him to lay down his Life in the bitterest and most inglorious manner, and exposed him to a cursed Death for our Redemption from that dreadful Curse which would have broken us to pieces, and irreparably have crusht us. He gave him to us, to suffer for us as a Man, and Redeem us as a God; to be a Sacrifice to expiate our Sin, by translating the Punishment upon himself, which was merited by us.

Thus

\* Heb. 1. 6.

† Psal. 2. 12.

\* Joh. 5. 23.

† Prov. 8. 30.

† Joh. 3. 16.

\* Heb. 7. 28.

\* Heb. 11. 17.



Thus was he made low to exalt us, and debased to advance us, *made poor to enrich us* \*; and Eclipsed to brighten our sullied Natures, and Wounded that he might be a *Physician* for our languishments: He was ordered to taste the bitter Cup of Death, that we might drink of the Rivers of Immortal Life, and pleasures: To submit to the frailties of the Humane Nature, that we might possess the Glories of the Divine: He was order'd to be a Sufferer, that we might be no longer Captives; and to pass through the Fire of Divine Wrath, that he might purge our Nature from the dross it had contracted. Thus was the Righteous given for Sin, the Innocent for Criminals, the Glory of Heaven for the Dregs of Earth, and the Immense Riches of a Deity expended to re-stock Man.

4. And a Son that was exalted for what he had done for us by the order of Divine Goodness. The Exaltation of Christ was no less a signal Mark of his miraculous Goodness to us, than of his Affection to him; since he was obedient by Divine Goodness to die for us, his advancement was for his obedience to those Orders. † The Name given to him *above every Name*, was a repeated Triumph of this Perfection; Since his Passion was not for himself, he was wholly Innocent, but for us who were Criminal. His advancement was not only for himself as Redeemer, but for us as Redeem'd: Divine Goodness center'd in him, both in his Cross and in his Crown; for it was for the *purging our Sins he sat down on the Right hand of the Majesty on high* \*: And the whole blessed Society of Principalities and Powers in Heaven admire this Goodness of God, and ascribe to him *Honour, Glory, and Power* for advancing the *Lamb slain* †. Divine Goodness did not only give him to us, but gave him Power, Riches, Strength, and Honour, for manifesting this Goodness to us, and opening the passages for its fuller conveyances to the Sons of Men. Had not God had thoughts of a perpetual Goodness, he would not have settled him so near him, to manage our Cause, and testified so much Affection to him on our behalf. This Goodness gave him to be debas'd for us, and order'd him to be Enthron'd for us: As it gave him to us Bleeding, so it would give him to us Triumphant; that as we have a share by Grace in the Merits of his Humiliation, we might partake also of the glories of his Coronation; that from first to last, we may behold nothing but the Triumphs of Divine Goodness to fallen Man.

5. In bestowing this Gift on us, Divine Goodness gives whole God to us. Whatsoever is great and excellent in the Godhead, the Father gives us, by giving us his Son: The Creator gives himself to us in his Son Christ. In giving Creatures to us, he gives the Riches of Earth; In giving himself to us, he gives the Riches of Heaven, which surmount all understanding: 'Tis in this Gift he becomes our God, and passeth over the Title of all that he is for our use and benefit, that every Attribute in the Divine Nature may be claim'd by us; not to be imparted to us whereby we may be deified; but employ'd for our welfare, whereby we may be blessed. He gave himself in Creation to us in the Image of his Holiness; but in Redemption he gave himself in the Image of his Person: He would not only communicate the Goodness without him, but bestow upon us the infinite Goodness of his own Nature; That that which was his own End and Happiness, might be our End and Happiness, *viz.* Himself.

By giving his Son, he hath given himself; and in both Gifts he hath given all things to us: The Creator of all things is eminently all things: *He hath given all things into the hands of his Son*, \* and by consequence given all things into the hands of his Redeem'd Creatures, by giving them him to whom he gave all things; Whatsoever we were invested in by Creation, whatsoever we were depriv'd of by Corruption, and more, he hath deposited in safe hands for our enjoyment: And what can Divine Goodness do more

\* 1 Cor. 1. 3.

† 1 Tim. 3. 16.

\* Heb. 1. 3.

† Revel. 5. 11.

1. 13.

\* Job. 3. 35.



more for us? What further can it give unto us, than what it hath given, and in that Gift design'd for us?

3. *This Goodness is enhanc'd by considering the State of Man in the first Transgression; and since.*

1. *Mans first Transgression.* If we should rip up every Vein of that first Sin, should we find any want of Wickedness to excite a just Indignation? What was there but ingratitude to Divine Bounty, and Rebellion against Divine Sovereignty? The Royalty of God was attempted, the Supremacy of Divine knowledge above Mans own knowledge envied; the Riches of Goodness whereby he lived and breathed, slighted: There is a discontent with God upon an unreasonable Sentiment, that God had denied a knowledge to him, which was his right and due; when there should have been an humble acknowledgment of that unmerited Goodness, which had not only given him a Being above other Creatures, but placed him the Governor and Lord of those that were inferior to him: What alienation of his understanding was there from knowing God, and of his will from loving him? A Debauch of all his Faculties: A Spiritual Adultery, in preferring not only one of Gods Creatures, but one of his desperate Enemies before him; thinking him a wiser Counsellor than Infinite Wisdom, and imagining him possessed with kinder affections to him, than that God who had newly Created him. Thus he joyns in League with Hell against Heaven, with a Fallen Spirit against his Bountiful Benefactor, and enters into Society with Rebels, that just before commenc'd a War against his and their common Sovereign: He did not only falter in, but cast off the Obedience due to his Creator; endeavoured to purloin his Glory, and actually murder'd all those that were virtually in his Loyns. \* *Sin enter'd into the World by him, and Death by Sin,* \* Rom. 5. 12. *and pass'd upon all Men,* taking them off from their Subjection to God, to be Slaves to the damn'd Spirits, and Heirs of their Misery: And after all this he adds a foul imputation on God, taxing him as the Author of his Sin, and thereby stains the Beauty of his Holiness. But notwithstanding all this, God stops not up the Floodgates of his Goodness, nor doth he entertain Fiery Resolutions against Man, but brings forth a healing Promise; and sends not an Angel upon Commission, to Reveal it to him, but Preaches it himself to this Forlorn and Rebellious Creature. †

† Gen. 3. 15.

2. *Could there be any thing in this Fallen Creature, to allure God to the Expression of his Goodness?* Was there any good action in all his Carriage, that could plead for a readmission of him to his former State? Was there one good quality left, that could be an Orator to perswade Divine Goodness to such a gracious Procedure? Was there any Moral Goodness in Man after this Debauch, that might be an Object of Divine Love? What was there in him, that was not rather a provocation, than an allurements? Could you expect that any Perfection in God, should find a Motive in this ungrateful Apostate, to open a Mouth for him, and be an Advocate to support him, and bring him off from a just Tribunal? Or after Divine Goodness had begun to pity and plead for Man, is it not wonderful that it should not discontinue the Plea, after it found Mans Excuse to be as black as his Crime \*; \* Gen. 3. 12. and his Carriage upon his Examination, to be as disobliging as his first Revolt? It might well be expected, that all the Perfections in the Divine Nature, would have entered into an association eternally to treat this Rebel according to his deserts. What attractives were there in a silly Worm, much less in such compleat Wickedness, inexcusable Enmity, infamous Rebellion, to design a Redeemer for him, and such a Person as the Son of God to a Flethy Body, an Eclipse of Glory, and an ignominious Cross? The meaness of Man was further from alluring God to it, than the dignity of Angels.

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3. *Was there not a World of demerit in Man, to animate Grace as well as Wrath against him.* We were so far from deserving the opening any Streams of Goodness, that we had merited Floods of devouring Wrath. What were all Men, but Enemies to God in a high manner? Every offence was infinite, as being committed against a Being of Infinite Dignity; it was a stroke at the very Being of God; A resistance of all his Attributes; it would degrade him from the height and Perfection of his Nature; it would not by its good will suffer God to be God. If he that hates his Brother, is a Murderer of his Brother, he that hates his Creator, is a Murderer of the Deity; \* and every *Carual mind is Enmity to God* †: Every Sin envies him his Authority by breaking his Precept; and envies him his Goodness by defacing the Marks of it: Every Sin comprehends in it more than Men or Angels can conceive: That God who only hath the clear apprehensions of his own Dignity, hath the sole clear apprehensions of Sins Malignity. All Men were thus by Nature; those that sinned before the coming of the Redeemer, had been in a State of Sin; those that were to come after him would be in a State of Sin by their Birth, and be Criminals as soon as ever they were Creatures. All Men, as well the Glorifi'd as those in the Flesh at the coming of the Redeemer, and those that were to be born after, were consider'd in a State of Sin by God, when he bruise'd the Redeemer for them: All were filthy and unworthy of the Eye of God: All had employ'd the Faculties of their Souls, and the Members of their Bodies, which they enjoyed by his Goodness, against the interest of his Glory. Every Rational Creature had made himself a Slave to those Creatures over whom he had been appointed a Lord; subjected himself as a Servant to his Inferior, and strutted as a Superior against his Liberal Sovereign, and by every Sin rendred himself more a Child of Satan, and Enemy of God, and more worthy of the Curses of the Law, and the Torments of Hell: Was it not now a mighty Goodness that would surmount those high Mountains of Demerit, and elevate such Creatures by the Depression of his Son? Had we been possessed of the highest Holiness, a Reward had been the natural effect of Goodness: It was not possible that God should be unkind to a Righteous and Innocent Creature: His Grace would have Crown'd that, which had been so agreeable to him: He had been a denier of himself, had he numbred Innocent Creatures in the Rank of the Miserable. But to be kind to an Enemy: To run Counter to the vastness of Demerit in Man, was a Superlative Goodness; a Goodness triumphing above all the provocations of Men, and Pleas of Justice. It was an abounding Goodness of Grace: \* *Where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound,* *improportionally.* It swell'd above the heights of Sin, and triumphed more than all his other Attributes.

\* Joh. 1. 9. 15.

† Rom. 8. 7.

\* Rom. 5. 20.

4. *Man was reduced to the lowest Condition.* Our Crimes had brought us to the lowest Calamity; we were brought to the dust, and prepar'd for Hell. Adam had not the boldness to Request, and therefore we may Judge he had not the least hopes of Pardon; he was sunk under Wrath, and could have expected no better an Entertainment, than the Tempter, whose solicitations he submitted to: We had cast the Diadem from our heads, and lost all our Original Excellency: We were lost to our own Happiness, and lost to our Creators Service, when he was so kind as to send his Son to seek us, *Matth. 18. 11.* and so liberal as to expend his Blood for our cure and preservation. How great was that Goodness that would not abandon us in our Misery, but remit our Crimes, and rescue our Persons, and ransom our Souls by so great a Price from the Rights of Justice, and horrors of Hell, we were so fitted for?

5. *Every Age multiplied Provocations.* Every Age of the World proved more degenerate; The Traditions which were purer and more lively among Adams immediate Posterity, were more dark among his further Descendents.



scendants. Idolatry, whereof we have no Marks in the old World before the Deluge, was frequent afterwards in every Nation: Not only the knowledge of the true God was lost, but the Natural Reverential thoughts of a Deity were expelled. Hence Gods were dubb'd according to Mens humors; and not only Human Passions, but Brutish Vices ascrib'd to them: As by the Fall we were become less than Men, so we would fancy God no better than a Beast, since Beasts were Worshipped as Gods \*; yea, fancied God no better than a Devil; since that Destroyer was Worshipped instead of the Creator; and a Homage paid to the Powers of Hell that had ruin'd them, which was due to the Goodness of that Benefactor, who had made them and preserved them in the World. The vilest Creatures were Deifi'd; Reason was debas'd below Common Sense: And Men ador'd one end of a Log, while they warmed themselves with the other †; as if that which was Ordain'd for the Kitchen, were a fit Representation for God in the Temple. Thus were the Natural Notions of a Deity deprav'd; the whole World drencht in Idolatry; And though the Jews were free from that gross abuse of God, yet they were sunk also into loathsome Superstitions, when the Goodness of God brought in his design'd Redeemer and Redemption into the World.

\* Rom. 1. 21.

† Isai. 44. 14. 16, 17.

6. *The impotence of Man enhanceth this Goodness.* Our own Eye did scarce pity us, and it was impossible for our own hands to relieve us; we were insensible of our Misery, in love with our Death; we courted our Chains, and the noise of our fettering Lusts were our Musick, \* *serving diverse Lusts and Pleasures.* Our Lusts were our Pleasures; Satans Yoke was as delightful to us to bear, as to him to impole: Instead of being his Opposers in his attempts against us, we were his voluntary Seconds, and every whit as willing to embrace, as he was to propose his Ruining Temptations. As no Man can recover himself from Death, so no Man can recover himself from Wrath; he is as unable to Redeem, as to Create himself; he might as soon have stript himself of his being, as put an end to his Misery; his Captivity would have been endless, and his Chains remediless, for any thing he could do to knock them off, and deliver himself; he was too much in love with the Sink of Sin, to leave wallowing in it, and under too powerful a hand, to cease frying in the Flames of Wrath. As the Law could not be obeyed by Man, after a corrupt Principle had enter'd into him, so neither could Justice be satisfied by him after his Transgression. The Sinner was indebted, but Bankrupt; As he was unable to pay a Mite of that Obedience he owed to the Precept, because of his enmity; so he was unable to satisfy what he owed to the Penalty, because of his Feebleness: He was as much without love to observe the one, as *without strength* to bear the other: † He could not because of his *Enmity be subject to the Law*, or compensate for his Sin, because he was \* *without strength.* His strength to offend was great; but to deliver himself a meer nothing. Repentance was not a thing known by Man after the fall, till he had hopes of Redemption; and if he had known and exercised it, what compensation are the Tears of a Malefactor for an injury done to the Crown, and attempting the life of his Prince? How great was Divine Goodness; not only to pity Men in this State, but to provide a strong Redeemer for them? *Oh Lord my Strength, and my Redeemer,* said the Psalmist †: When he found out a Redeemer for our Misery, he found out a Strength for our Impotency.

† Rom. 8. 7.

\* Rom. 5. 6.

† Psal. 19. 14.

To conclude this: Behold the Goodness of God, when we had thus unhand-  
somerly dealt with him; had nothing to allure his Goodness, Multitudes of  
Provocations to incense him, were reduced to a condition as low as could be,  
fit to be the Matter of his Scoffs, and the Sport of Divine Justice, and so  
weak that we could not repair our own Ruines; then did he open a Fountain  
of fresh Goodness in the Death of his Son, and sent forth such delightful  
Streams, as in our Original Creation, we could never have tasted; Not  
only overcame the Resentments of a Provoked Justice, but magnified it self

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by our lowness, and strengthened it self by our weakness : His Goodness had before Created an Innocent, but here it saves a Malefactor ; and sends his Son to die for us, as if the Holy of Holies were the Criminal, and the Rebel the Innocent. It had been a pompous Goodness, to have given him as a King ; but a Goodness of greater grandeur, to expose him as a Sacrifice for Slaves and Enemies : Had *Adam* remain'd Innocent, and proved thankful for what he had received, it had been great Goodness to have brought him to glory ; But to bring filthy and rebellious *Adam* to it, surmounts by unexpressible degrees, that sort of Goodness he had experimented before ; Since it was not from a light Evil, a tolerable Curse unawares brought upon us, but from the Yoke we had willingly submitted to, from the power of darkness we had courted, and the furnace of wrath we had kindled for our selves. What are we dead Dogs, that he should behold us with so gracious an Eye ? This Goodness is thus inanced, if you consider the State of Man in his first Transgression and after.

4. *This Goodness further appears in the high advancement of our Nature, after it had so highly offended.* By Creation, we had an affinity with Animals in our Bodies, with Angels in our Spirits, with God in his Image ; but not with God in our Nature till the Incarnation of the Redeemer. *Adam* by Creation was the Son of God, \* but his Nature was not one with the Person of God : He was his Son as Created by him, but had no affinity to him by vertue of union with him : But now Man doth not only see his Nature in multitudes of Men on Earth, but by an astonishing Goodness, beholds his Nature united to the Deity in Heaven : That as he was the Son of God by Creation, he is now the Brother of God by Redemption ; for with such a Title doth that Person, who was the *Son* of God as well as the *Son* of Man, honour his Disciples † : And because he is of the same Nature with them, he is not ashamed to call them *Brethren*, Heb. 2. 11.

Our Nature which was infinitely distant from, and below the Deity, now makes one Person with the Son of God. What Man sinfully aspired to, God hath graciously granted, and more : Man aspired to a likeness in knowledge, and God hath granted him an affinity in union. It had been astonishing Goodness to Angelize our Natures, but in Redemption Divine Goodness hath acted higher, in a sort to Deifie our Natures. In Creation our Nature was exalted above other Creatures on Earth ; in our Redemption our Nature is exalted above all the Host of Heaven : We were higher than the Beasts as Creatures, but *lower than the Angels* ; \* But by the Incarnation of the Son of God, our Nature is elevated many steps above them. After it had sunk it self by Corruption below the Bestial Nature, and as low as the Diabolical, the *fulness of the Godhead dwells in our Nature Bodily*, † but never in the Angels, Angelically. The Son of God descended to dignifie our Nature, by assuming it, and ascended with our Nature to have it crown'd above those standing Monuments of Divine Power, and Goodness. \* That Person that descended in our Nature into the Grave, and in the same Nature was raised up again, is in that same Nature set at the right hand of God in Heaven, *far above all Principality and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named.* Our Refined Clay by an indissoluble union with this Divine Person, is honoured to sit for ever upon a Throne above all the Tribes of *Seraphims* and *Cherubins* ; and the Person that wears it, is the head of the good Angels, and the conqueror of the bad ; The one are put under his Feet, and the other commanded to adore him, *that purged our Sins in our Nature* † : That Divine Person in our Nature receives Adoration from the Angels ; but the Nature of Man is not order'd to pay any Homage and Adorations to the Angels. How could Divine Goodness to Man more magnifie it self ? As we could not have a lower descent than we had by Sin, How could we have a higher ascent, than by a substantial participation of a Divine Life in our Nature

\* Luke 3. 38.

† Joh. 10. 17.

\* 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15. 49.

† Colos. 2. 9.

\* 1<sup>st</sup> Ephe. 20.

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† Heb. 1. 3, 6.



Nature in the unity of a Divine Person? Our Earthly Nature is joyned to a Heavenly Person; our undone Nature united to *one equal with God* \*. It may truly be said, that Man is God, which is infinitely more glorious for us, than if it could be said, Man is an Angel. If it were Goodness to advance our Innocent Nature above other Creatures, the advancement of our degenerate Nature above Angels deserves a higher Title than meer Goodness. 'Tis a more gracious act, than if all Men had been transformed into the pure Spiritual Nature of the loftiest Cherubins.

5. This Goodness is manifest in the *Covenant of Grace made with us, whereby we are freed from the rigor of that of Works*. God might have insisted upon the terms of the old Covenant, and requir'd of Man the improvement of his Original Stock; but God hath condescended to lower terms, and offer'd Man more gracious Methods, and mitigated the rigor of the first, by the sweetness of the second.

1. 'Tis Goodness, that he should condescend to make another Covenant with Man. To stipulate with Innocent and Righteous Adam for his Obedience, was a stoop of his Sovereignty: Though he gave the Precept as a Sovereign Lord, yet in his Covenanting he seems to descend to some kind of equality with that Dust and Ashes with whom he treated. Absolute Sovereigns do not usually Covenant with their People, but exact Obedience and Duty, without binding themselves to bestow a Reward; and if they intend any, they reserve the purpose in their own breasts, without treating their Subjects with a solemn declaration of it. There was no obligation on God to enter into the first Covenant, much less after the violation of the first, to the settlement of a new. If God seem'd in some sort to equal himself to Man in the first, he seem'd to descend below himself in treating with a Rebel upon more condescending terms in the second. If his Covenant with Innocent Adam was a stoop of his Sovereignty, this with Rebellious Adam seems to be a stripping himself of his Majesty in favour of his Goodness; As if his happiness depended upon us, and not ours upon him. 'Tis a Humiliation of himself to behold the things in Heaven, the glorious Angels, as well as things on Earth, mortal Men; † much more to bind himself in gracious bonds to the glorious Angels, and much more if to Rebel Man. In the first Covenant there was much of Sovereignty as well as Goodness; In the second there is less of Sovereignty, and more of Grace: In the first there was a Righteous Man for a Holy God; In the second a polluted Creature for a pure and provoked God: In the first he holds his Scepter in his hand, to Rule his Subjects; In the second he seems to lay by his Scepter, to Court and *Esouse a Beggar*: \* In the first he is a Lord; in the second a Husband, and binds himself upon Gracious Conditions to become a Debtor. How should this Goodness fill us with an humble astonishment, as it did Abraham, when he fell on his face, when he heard God speaking of making a Covenant with him! † And if God speaking to Israel out of the Fire, and making them to hear his voice out of Heaven, that he might instruct them, was a Consideration whereby Moses would heighten their admiration of Divine Goodness, and engage their affectionate Obedience to him \*; How much more admirable is it for God to speak so kindly to us through the pacifying Blood of the Covenant, that silenc'd the terrors of the old, and settled the tenderness of the new?

2. His Goodness is seen in the Nature and Tenor of the new Covenant. There are in this richer Streams of Love and Pity. The language of one was, *die if thou Sin*; that of the other, *live if thou believest* †: The old Covenant was founded upon the obedience of Man; the new is not founded upon the inconstancy of Mans Will, but the firmness of Divine Love, and the valuable Merit of Christ. The head of the first Covenant was Humane and

\* Phil. 2. 6.

† Psal. 113. 6.

\* Hosea 2. 18, 19, 20.

† Gen. 17. 2. 3.

\* Deut. 4. 32, 36, 40.

† Turreti, ser. 33.



and mutable; the *head* of the second is *Divine* and immutable. The Curse due to us by the breach of the *first*, is taken off by the indulgence of the *second*: \* We are by it snatch'd from the Jaws of the Law, to be wrapt up in the bosom of *Grace*: † For you *are not under the Law, but under Grace*; from the Curse and condemnation of the Law, to the sweetness and forgiveness of *Grace*. Christ bore the one, being *made a Curse for us*, \* that we might enjoy the sweetness of the other; By this we are brought from Mount *Sinai*, the Mount of Terrour, to Mount *Sion*, the Mount of Sacrificing, the Type of the great *Sacrifice* †: That Covenant brought in *Death upon one offence*, this Covenant offers *Life after many offences* \*: That involved us in a *Curse*, and this enricheth us with a *Blessing*: The breaches of that expell'd us out of *Paradise*, and the embracing of this admits us into Heaven. This Covenant demands, and admits of that Repentance, whereof there was no mention in the first: That demanded Obedience, not Repentance upon a failure; and though the exercises of it had been never so deep in the fall'n Creature, nothing of the Law's severity had been remitted by any virtue of it. Again, the first Covenant demanded exact Righteousness, but conveyed no cleansing virtue upon the contracting any filth. The first demands a continuance in the Righteousness conferr'd in Creation; the second imprints a gracious heart in Regeneration. *I will pour clean Water upon you; I will put a new Spirit within you*, was the voice of the second Covenant, not of the first. Again, as to Pardon: *Adams* Covenant was to punish him, not to pardon him if he fell; That threatned Death upon Transgression, this remits it; That was an Act of Divine Sovereignty declaring the will of God, this is an Act of Divine Grace, passing an Act of Oblivion on the Crimes of the Creature: That, as it demanded no Repentance upon a failure, so it promised no Mercy upon guilt: That conven'd our Sin, and condemned us for it; this clears our guilt, and comforts us under it. The first Covenant related us to God as a Judge; every transgression against it forfeited his indulgence as a Father: The second delivers us from God as a condemning Judge, to bring us under his Wing as an affectionate Father: In the one there was a dreadful frown to scare us, in the other a healing Wing to cover and relieve us. Again, in regard of Righteousness: That demanded our performance of a Righteousness in and by our selves, and our own strength; This demands our acceptance of a Righteousness higher than ever the standing Angels had: The Righteousness of the first Covenant was the Righteousness of a Man; the Righteousness of the second, is the *Righteousness* of a God †. Again in regard of that Obedience it demands, it exacts not of us as a necessary condition the Perfection of Obedience, but the sincerity of Obedience; an uprightness in our intention, not an unspottedness in our action; an integrity in our aims, and an industry in our compliance with Divine Precepts, \* *Walk before me, and be thou perfect, i. e. sincere*. What is hearty in our actions is accepted, and what is defective is over-looked, and not charg'd upon us, because of the Obedience and Righteousness of our surety. The first Covenant rejected all our services after Sin; the services of a Person under the sentence of Death are but dead services; This accepts our imperfect services after Faith in it; That administred no strength to obey, but supposed it; This supposeth our inability to obey, and confers some strength for it, † *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes*. Again, in regard of the Promises; \* The old Covenant had good, but the new hath *better Promises*, of justification after guilt, and sanctification after filth, and glorification at last of the whole Man. In the first there was provision against guilt, but none for the removal of it: Provision against filth, but none for the cleansing of it: Promise of happiness implied, but not so great a one as that *Life and Immortality* in Heaven, brought to light by the Gospel. † Why said to be brought to light by the Gospel? because it was not only buried upon the fall of Man under the Curses of the Law, but it was not so obvious to the conceptions

\* Rom. 7. 1.

† Rom. 6. 14.

\* Gal. 3. 13.

† Heb. 12. 18.

22.

\* Rom. 5. 16.

27.

† 2 Cor. 5. 21.

\* Gen. 17. 1.

† Ezek. 36. 27.

\* Heb. 8. 6.

† 2 Tim. 1. 10.



ceptions of Man in his Innocent State. Life indeed was implied to be promised upon his standing, but not so glorious an immortality disclosed, to be reserved for him, if he stood. As it is a Covenant of better Promises, to a Covenant of sweeter Comforts; Comforts more choice, and Comforts more durable; An *everlasting Consolation*, and a *good hope* are the fruits of Grace, *i. e.* the Covenant of Grace\*: In the whole there is such a love disclosed, as cannot be exprest; The Apostle leaves it to every Mans mind to conceive it, if he could, *what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be call'd the Sons of God*†. It inflames us in such a manner of the love of God as he bears to his Son the Image of his Person; \* *That the World may know, that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.* \* 2 Thes. 2. 16. † 1 John 3. 1.

3. This Goodness appears in the choice gift of himself which he hath made over in this Covenant. You know how it runs in Scripture, *I will be their God, and they shall be my People*†: A propriety in the Deity is made over by it. As he gave the Blood of his Son to Seal the Covenant, so he gave himself as the Blessing of the Covenant; *He is not ashamed to be called their God.* \* Though he be environ'd with Millions of Angels, and presides over them in an unexpressible glory, he is not ashamed of his condescensions to Man, and to pass over himself as the propriety of his People, as well as to take them to be his. 'Tis a diminution of the sense of the place, to understand it of God as Creator; what reason was there for God to be ashamed of the Expressions of his Power, Wisdom, Goodness in the works of his hands? but we might have reason to think, there might be some ground in God, to be ashamed of making himself over in a Deed of Gift to a mean Worm, and a filthy Rebel; this might seem a disparagement to his Majesty; but God is not ashamed of a Title so mean, as the God of his despis'd People. A Title below those others, of the *Lord of Hosts, glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders, riding on the wings of the Wind, walking in the Circuits of Heaven.* He is no more ashamed of this Title of being our God, than he is of those other that sound more glorious: He would rather have his Greatness veil to his Goodness, than his Goodness be confin'd by his Majesty. He is not only our God, but our God as he is the God of Christ. He is not ashamed to be our Propriety, and Christ is not ashamed to own his People in a Partnership with him in this Propriety; † *I ascend to my God, and your God.* \* John 10. 17. This of Gods being our God, is the quintessence of the Covenant, the Soul of all the Promises: In this he hath promised whatsoever is Infinite in him, whatsoever is the Glory and Ornament of his Nature for our use: Not a part of him, or one single Perfection, but the whole vigor and strength of all. As he is not a God without Infinite Wisdom, and Infinite Power, and Infinite Goodness, and Infinite Blessedness, &c. so he passes over in this Covenant all that which presents him as the most adorable Being to his Creatures: He will be to them as Great, as Wise, as Powerful, as Good as he is in himself. And the assuring us in this Covenant to be our God, imports also that he will do as much for us, as we would do for our selves, were we furnish'd with the same Goodness, Power, and Wisdom: In being our God, he testifies 'tis all one, as if we had the same Perfections in our own power to employ for our use; For he being possessed with them, 'tis as much, as if we our selves were possessed with them for our own advantage, according to the Rules of Wisdom, and the several Conditions we pass through for his Glory; but this must be taken with a relation to that Wisdom, which he observes in his proceedings with us as Creatures, and according to the several Conditions we pass through for his Glory. Thus Gods being ours is more than if all Heaven and Earth were ours besides: 'Tis more than if we were fully our own and at our own dispose; it makes *all things that God hath ours* \*. And therefore not only all things he hath Created, but all things that he can Create: Not only all things that he hath contrived, but all things that he can contrive: For in being ours, his Power is ours, his possible Power

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as well as his active Power ; his Power whereby he can effect more than he hath done ; and his Wisdom whereby he can contrive more than he hath done ; so that if there were need of employing his Power to Create many Worlds for our good, he would not stick at it ; for if he did, he would not be our God in the extent of his Nature, as the Promise intimates. What a rich Goodness, and a fulness of Bounty is there in this short Expression, as full as the expression of a God can make it to be intelligible, to such Creatures as we are ?

\* Heb. 6. 17.  
18.

† Heb. 6. 13.

4. This Goodness is further manifest in the Confirmation of the Covenant. His Goodness did not only condescend to make it for our happiness, after we had made our selves miserable, but further condescended to ratifie it in the solemnest manner for our assurance, to over-rule all the Despondencies unbelief could raise up in our Souls. The reason why he confirmed it by an Oath, was to shew the immutability of his glorious Counsel ; not to tie himself to keep it : For his Word and Promise is in it self as immutable as his Oath ; They were two immutable things, his Word, and his Oath, one as unchangable as the other ; but for the strength of our Consolation, that it might have no reason to shake and totter\* : He would condescend as low as was possible for a God to do for the satisfaction of the dejected Creature. When the first Covenant was broken, and it was impossible for Man to fulfil the terms of it, and mount to Happiness thereby, he makes another : And as if we had reason to distrust him in the first, he solemnly Ratifies it in a higher manner than he had done the other, and swears by himself, that he will be true to it, not so much out of an Election of himself, as the Object of the Oath. † Because he could not swear by a greater, he swears by himself ; whereby the Apostle clearly intimates, that Divine Goodness was raised to such a height for us, that if there had been any thing else more sacred than himself, or that could have punished him, if he had broken it, that he would have sworn by, to silence any diffidence in us, and confirm us in the reality of his intentions. Now if it were a mighty Mark of Goodness, for God to stoop to a Covenanting with us ; it was more for a Sovereign to bind himself so solemnly, to be our Debtor in a Promise, as well as he was our Sovereign in the Precept, and stoop so low in it to satisfy the distrusts of that Creature, that deserved for ever to lie soaking in his own ruines, for not believing his bare word. What absolute Prince would ever stoop so low, as to Article with Rebellious Subjects, whom he could in a moment set his Foot upon and crush ; much less countenance a causeless distrust of his Goodness by the addition of his Oath, and thereby bind his own hands, which were unconfin'd before, and free to do what he pleased with them ?

5. This Goodness of God is remarkable also in the Condition of this Covenant, which is Faith. This was the easiest Condition in its own Nature, that could be imagin'd : No difficulty in it but what proceeds from the pride of Mans Nature, and the obstinacy of his Will : It was not impossible in it self ; it was not the old Condition of perfect Obedience : It had been mighty Goodness to set us up again upon our old Stock, and restore us to the Tenor and Condition of the Covenant of Works, or to have requir'd the burdensom Ceremonies of the Law. Nor is it an exact knowledge he requires of us ; all Mens understandings being of a different size, they had not been capable of this. It was the most reasonable Condition, in regard of the excellency of the things proposed, and the effects following upon it ; Nay, it was necessary. It had been a want of Goodness to himself and his own Honour ; he had cast that off, had he not insisted on this Condition of Faith ; it being the lowest he could condescend to with a salvo for his Glory. And it was a Goodness to us ; 'tis nothing else he requires, but a willingness to accept what he hath contrived, and acted for us : And no Man can be happy against his will ; without this belief at least, Man could



could never voluntarily have arriv'd to his Happiness. The Goodness of God is evidenced in that,

First, *'Tis an easie Condition, not impossible.*

1. *It was not the Condition of the old Covenant.* The Condition of that was an entire Obedience to every Precept with a Mans whole strength, and without any flaw or crack. But the Condition of the Evangelical Covenant is a sincere though weak Faith; He hath suited this Covenant to the Misery of Mans fall'n Condition: He considers our weakness, and that we are but Dust, and therefore exacts not of us an entire, but a sincere Obedience. Had God sent Christ to expiate the Crime of *Adam*, restore him to his Paradise Estate, and repair in Man the ruin'd Image of Holiness, and after this to have renewed the Covenant of Works for the future, and settled the same Condition in exacting a compleat Obedience for the time to come; Divine Goodness had been above any accusation, and had deserv'd our highest admiration in the pardon of former Transgressions, and giving out to us our first Stock. But Divine Goodness took larger strides: He had tried our first Condition, and found his mutable Creature quickly to violate it: Had he demanded the same now, 'tis likely it had met with the same issue as before in Mans disobedience and fall; we should have been *as Men*, *as Adam*, \* *transgressing the Covenant*, and then we must have lain groaning under our Disease, and wallowing in our Blood, unless Christ had come to die for the Expiation of our new Crimes; for every Transgression had been a violation of that Covenant, and a forfeiture of our Right to the benefits of it. If we had broke it but in one tittle, we had rendred our selves incapable to fulfil it for the future; that one Transgression had stood as a bar against the pleas of after Obedience. But God hath wholly laid that Condition aside as to us, and settled that of Faith, more easie to be perform'd, and to be renew'd by us. 'Tis infinite Grace in him, that he will accept of *Faith* in us, instead of that perfect Obedience, he requir'd of us in the Covenant of Works.

2. *It is easie, not like the burdensom Ceremonies appointed under the Law.* He exacts not now the legal Obedience, expensive Sacrifices, troublesome Purifications and Abstinencies, that *Yoke of Bondage*, † which they were *not able to bear*. \* He treats us not as Servants, or Children in their Nonage under the Elements of the World, nor requires those innumerable bodily Exercises, that he exacted of them: He demands not *1000 of Lambs*, and *Rivers of Oyl*; but he requires a *sincere* Confession and Repentance in order to our absolution; an *unsain'd Faith* in order to our Blessedness, and elevation to a Glorious Life. He requires only that we should believe what he saith, and have so good an opinion of his Goodness and Veracity, as to perswade our selves of the reality of his Intentions, confide in his Word, and rely upon his Promise, cordially embrace his Crucified Son, whom he hath set forth as the means of our Happiness, and have a sincere Respect to all the discoveries of his Will. What can be more easie than this? Though some in the days of the *Apostles*, and others since have endeavoured to introduce a multitude of legal Burthens, as if they envied God the Expressions of his Goodness, or thought him guilty of too much Remissness, in taking off the Yoke, and treating Man too favourably.

3. *Nor is it a clear knowledge of every Revelation*, that is the Condition of this Covenant. God in his kindness to Man hath made Revelations of himself, but his Goodness is manifested in obliging us to believe him, not fully to understand him. He hath made them by sufficient Testimonies as clear to our Faith, as they are incomprehensible to our Reason: He hath reveal'd a Trinity of Persons in their distinct Offices in the business of Redemption, without which Revelation of a Trinity, we could not have a right Notion and Scheme of Redeeming Grace. But since the clearness of Mens understanding is sullied

\* Hof. 6. 7.

† Gal. 5. 7.

\* Acts 15. 10.



by the fall, and hath lost its Wings to fly up to a knowledge of such sublime things as that of the Trinity, and other Mysteries of the Christian Religion: God hath manifested his Goodness in not obliging us to understand them, but to believe them, and hath given us reason enough to believe it to be his Revelation, (both from the Nature of the Revelation it self, and the way and manner of propagating it; which is wholly Divine, exceeding all the Methods of Humane Art) though he hath not extended our understandings to a capacity to know them, and render a reason of every Mystery. He did not require of every *Israelite*, or of any of them that were stung by the fiery Serpents, that they should understand, or be able to discourse of the Nature and Qualities of that Braze of which the Serpent upon the Pole was made, or by what Art that Serpent was formed, or in what manner the sight of it did operate in them for their Cure; it was enough that they did believe the Institution, and Precept of God, and that their own Cure was assured by it: It was enough if they cast their Eyes upon it according to the direction. The understandings of Men are of several sizes and elevations, one higher than another: If the Condition of this Covenant had been a greatness of knowledge, the most acute Men had only enjoyed the benefits of it. But it is *Faith*, which is as easie to be performed by the ignorant and simple, as by the strongest and most towering Mind: 'Tis that which is within the compass of every Mans understanding. God did not require that every one within the Verge of the Covenant, should be able to discourse of it to the reasons of Men: He requir'd not that every Man should be a *Philosopher*, or an *Orator*, but a Believer. What could be more easie than to lift up the Eye to the Brazen Serpent, to be Cur'd of a fiery Sting? What could be more facile than a glance, which is done without any pain, and in a moment? 'Tis a Condition may be perform'd by the weakest as well as the strongest: Could those that were bitten in the most Vital part, cast up their Eyes, though at the last gasp, they would arise to health by the expulsion of the Venom.

2. As 'tis Easie, so 'tis *Reasonable*. Repent and Believe is that which is requir'd by Christ and the Apostles for the injoyment of the Kingdom of Heaven: 'Tis very reasonable that things so great and glorious, so beneficial to Men, and reveal'd to them by so sound an Authority, and an unerring truth, should be believed. The Excellency of the thing disclos'd could admit of no lower a Condition than to be believ'd and embraced. There is a sort of Faith, that is a Natural Condition in every thing: All Religion in the World, though never so false, depends upon a sort of it; for unless there be a belief of future things, there would never be a hope of Good, or a fear of Evil, the two great Hinges upon which Religion moves. In all kinds of Learning, many things must be believed, before a progress can be made. Belief of one another is necessary in all acts of Humane Life; without which Humane Society would be unlinkt and dissolv'd. What is that Faith that God requires of us in this Covenant, but a *willingness* of Soul to take God for our God, Christ for our Mediator, and the Procurer of our Happiness\*? What Prince could require less upon any Promise he makes his Subjects, than to be believed as true, and depended on as good? That they should accept his Pardon, and other gracious offers, and be sincere in their Allegiance to him, avoiding all things that may offend him, and pursuing all things that may please him: Thus God by so small and reasonable a Condition as Faith, lets in the Fruits of Christs Death into our Soul, and wraps us up in the fruition of all the Priviledges purchas'd by it. So much he hath condescended in his Goodness, that upon so slight a Condition we may plead his Promise, and humbly challenge by vertue of the Covenant those good things he hath promised in his Word: 'Tis so reasonable a Condition, that if God did not require it in the Covenant of Grace, the Creature were obliged to perform it: For the publishing any Truth from God, naturally calls for Credit to be given

\* Rev. 22. 17.



it by the Creature, and an entertainment of it in Practice. Could you offer a more reasonable Condition your selves, had it been left to your choice? Should a Prince proclaim a Pardon to a profligate Wretch, would not all the World cry shame of him, if he did not believe it upon the highest assurances? and if Ingenuity did not make him sorry for his Crimes, and careful in the Duty of a Subject, surely the World would cry shame of such a Person.

5. 'Tis a necessary Condition.

1. *Necessary for the honour of God.* A Prince is disparag'd if his Authority in his Law, and if his Graciousness in his Promises be not accepted and believed. What Physician would undertake a Cure, if his Precepts may not be Credited? 'Tis the first thing in the order of Nature, that the Revelation of God should be believed, that the reality of his Intentions in inviting Man to the acceptance of those Methods, he hath prescribed for their attaining their chief Happiness, should be acknowledged. 'Tis a debasing Notion of God, that he should give a Happiness, purchased by Divine Blood, to a Person that hath no value for it, nor any abhorrency of those Sins that occasion'd so great a Suffering, nor any will to avoid them: Should he not vilify himself, to bestow a Heaven upon that Man, that will not believe the offers of it, nor walk in those ways that leads to it? That walks so, as if he would declare, there was no truth in his Word, nor Holiness in his Nature? Would not God by such an act verifie a truth in the language of their practice, viz. that he were both false and impure, careless of his Word, and negligent of his Holiness? As God was so desirous to ensure the Consolation of Believers, that if there had been a greater Being than himself to attest, and for him to be Responsible to, for the confirmation of his Promise, he would willingly have submitted to him, and have made him the Umpire; \* *He swore by himself, because he could not swear by a greater.* By the same reason; Had it stood with the Majesty and Wisdom of God to stoop to lower Conditions in this Covenant, for the reducing of Man to his Duty and Happiness, he would have done it; but his Goodness could not take lower steps with the preservation of the Rights of his Majesty, and the Honour of his Wisdom. Would you have had him wholly submitted to the obstinate will of a Rebellious Creature, and be ruled only by his terms? Would you have had him receiv'd Men to Happiness, after they had heightned their Crimes by a contempt of his Grace as well as of his Creating Goodness, and have made them blessed under the guilt of their Crimes without an acknowledgment? Should he glorify one that will not believe what he hath reveal'd, nor repent of what himself hath committed; and so save a Man after a repeated unthankfulness to the most immense Grace that ever was, or can be discovered, and offer'd, without a detestation of his ingratitude, and a voluntary acceptance of his offers? 'Tis necessary for the honour of God, that Man should accept of his terms, and not give Laws to him, to whom he is obnoxious as a guilty Person, as well as Subject as a Creature.

\* Heb. 6. 19.

Again, it was very equitable and necessary for the honour of God, that since Man fell by an unbelief of his Precept and Threatning, he should not rise again without a belief of his Promise, and casting himself upon his Truth in that: Since he had vilified the honour of his Truth in the Threatning: Since Man in his fall would lean to his own understanding against God, 'tis fit that in his Recovery, the highest powers of his Soul, his Understanding and Will should be subjected to him in an intire Resignation. Now, whereas Knowledge seems to have a power over its Object, *Faith* is a full submission to that which is the Object of it. Since Man intended a glorying in himself; the Evangelical Covenant directs its whole battery against it, that Men may *glory in nothing* but Divine Goodness†. Had Man perform'd exact Obedience by his own Strength, he had had something in himself as the Matter

† 1 Cor. 1. 31.  
30, 31.



of his Glory. And though after the fall Grace had made it self illustrious, in setting him up upon a new Stock, yet had the same Condition of exact Obedience been settled in the same manner, Man would have had something to glory in, which is strook off wholly by Faith; whereby Man in every act must go out of himself for a supply, to that Mediator which Divine Goodness and Grace hath appointed.

2. 'Tis necessary for the happiness of Man. That can be no contenting Condition wherein the will of Man doth not concur. He that is forced to the most delicious Diet, or to wear the bravest Apparel, or to be stor'd with abundance of Treasure, cannot be happy in those things without an esteem of them, and delight in them: If they be nauseous to him, the indisposition of his mind is a dead Fly in those Boxes of precious Ointment. Now Faith being a sincere willingness to accept of Christ, and to come to God by him; and Repentance being a detestation of that, which made Mans separation from God, 'tis impossible he could be voluntarily happy without it: Man cannot attain and enjoy a true happiness without an operation of his understanding about the Object proposed, and the means appointed to enjoy it: There must be a knowledge of what is offer'd, and of the way of it, and such a knowledge as may determine the will, to affect that end, and embrace those means; which the will can never do, till the understanding be fully perswaded of the truth of the Offerer, and the goodness of the Proposal it self, and the conveniency of the means for the attaining of it. 'Tis necessary in the nature of the thing, that what is reveal'd, should be believ'd to be a Divine Revelation. God must be judged true in the Promising Justification, and Sanctification, the means of happiness; and if any Man desires to be Partaker of those Promises, he must desire to be Sanctified; and how can he desire that which is the Matter of those Promises, if he wallow in his own lusts, and desire to do so, a thing repugnant to the Promise it self? Would you have God force Man to be happy against his will? Is it not very reasonable, he should demand the consent of his reasonable Creature, to that Blessedness he offers him? The new Covenant is a *Marriage Covenant*\*, which implies a consent on our parts, as well as a consent on Gods part; That is no Marriage, that hath not the consent of both Parties. Now Faith is our actual Consent, and Repentance and sincere Obedience are the Testimonies of the truth and reality of this Consent.

\* Hof. 2. 16,  
19. 20.

6. Divine Goodness is eminent in his Methods of treating with Men to embrace this Covenant. They are Methods of gentleness and sweetness: 'Tis a wooing Goodness, and a bewailing Goodness; His Expressions are with strong motions of affection: He carrieth not on the Gospel by force of Arms: He doth not solely menace Men into it, as Worldly Conquerors have done: He doth not as *Mahomet*, plunder Mens Estates, and wound their Bodies, to imprint a Religion on their Souls: He doth not erect Gibbets, and kindle Faggots, to scare Men to an entering into Covenant with him. What Multitudes might he have raised by his power, as well as others? What Legions of *Angels* might he have Rendezvouz'd from Heaven, to have beaten Men into a profession of the Gospel? Nor doth he only interpose his Sovereign Authority in the Precept of Faith, but useth Rational Expostulations, to move Men voluntarily to comply with his Proposals; † *Come now saith the Lord, let us reason together*. He seems to call Heaven and Earth to be judge, whether he had been wanting in any reasonable ways of Goodness, to overcome the perversity of the Creature; \* *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth, I have nourished and brought up Children*. What various encouragements doth he use agreeable to the Nature of Men, endeavouring to perswade them with all tenderness, not to despise their own Mercies, and be Enemies to their own Happiness? He would allure us by his Beauty, and win us by his Mercy.

† Isaiah 1. 18.

\* Isaiah 1. 2.



Mercy. He uses the Arms of his own Excellency, and our necessity to prevail upon us; and this after the highest provocations. When *Adam* had trampled upon his Creating Goodness, it was not crushed; and when Man had cast it from him, it took the higher rebound: When the Rebels provocation was fresh in his mind, he sought him out with a promise in his hand, though *Adam* fled from him out of enmity, as well as fear\*. And when the *Jews* had outraged his Son, whom he loved from Eternity, and made the Lord of Heaven and Earth bow down his head like a Slave on the Cross, yet in that place where the most horrible wickedness had been committed, must the Gospel be preached: The *Law* must go forth out of that *Sion*, and the *Apostles* must not stir from thence, till they had received the promise of the Spirit, and published the Word of Grace in that ungrateful City, whose Inhabitants yet swelled with indignation against the Lord of Life, and the Doctrine he had preached among them: † He would overlook their indignities out of tenderness to their Souls; and expose the *Apostles* to the peril of their Lives, rather than expose his Enemies to the fury of the Devil.

\* Gen. 3.

† Luke 24. 47.  
\* Acts 1. 4. 5.

1. How affectionately doth he invite Men? What multitudes of alluring Promises, and pressing Exhortations are there every where sprinkled in the Scripture, and in such a passionate manner, as if God were solely concerned in our good, without a glance on his own glory? How tenderly doth he woo flinty hearts, and express more pity to them, than they do to themselves? With what affection do his Bowels rise up to his Lips in his Speech in the Prophet, \* Hearken to me, O my People, and give ear unto me, O my Nation, † *my People, my Nation?* Melting Expressions of a tender God soliciting a rebellious People, to make their retreat to him: He never emptied his hand of his Bounty, nor dejected his Lips of those charitable Expressions. He sent *Noah* to move the Wicked of the old World to an embracing of his Goodness, and frequent Prophets to the provoking *Jews*; and as the World continued, and grew up to a taller stature in Sin, he stoops more in the manner of his Expressions. Never was the World at a higher pitch of Idolatry, than at the first publishing the Gospel; yet when we should have expected him to be a punishing, he is a beseeching God. The Apostle fears not to use the Expression for the glory of Divine Goodness, † *We are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us.* The beseeching voice of God is in the voice of the Ministry, as the voice of the Prince is in that of the Herald: 'Tis as if Divine Goodness did kneel down to a Sinner with wringed Hands and blubber'd Cheeks, intreating him not to force him to re-assume a Tribunal of Justice in the nature of a Judge, since he would treat with Man upon a Throne of Grace in the nature of a Father; yea, he seems to put himself into the posture of the Criminal, that the offending Creature might not feel the punishment due to a Rebel. 'Tis not the condescension, but the interest of a Traytor to creep upon his knees in Sackcloth to his Sovereign, to beg his life: But it is a Miraculous Goodness in the Sovereign to creep in the lowest posture to the Rebel, to importune him not only for an amity to him, but a love to his own life and happiness; This he doth, not only in his general proclamations, but in his particular wooings, those inward courtings of his Spirit, soliciting them with more diligence (if they would observe it) to their happiness, than the Devil tempts them to the ways of their Misery. As he was first in Christ, reconciling the World, when the World looked not after him; so he is first in his Spirit, wooing the World to accept of that Reconciliation, when the World will not listen to him. How often doth he flash up the Light of Nature, and the Light of the Word in Mens hearts, to move them not to lie down in sparks of their own kindling, but to aspire to a better happiness, and prepare them to be subject to a higher Mercy; If they would improve his present intreaties to such an end? And what are his Threatnings design'd for, but to move the Wheel of

† Isaiah 1. 4.

\* 2 Cor. 5. 20.

our



our Fears, that the Wheel of our Desire and Love might be set on Motion for the embracing his Promise? They are not so much the Thunders of his Justice, as the loud Rhetorick of his good Will, to prevent Mens Misery under the Vials of Wrath. 'Tis his kindness to scare Men by threatnings, that Justice might not strike them with the Sword: 'Tis not the destruction, but the preserving Reformation that he aims at: *He hath no pleasure in the death of the Wicked*; This he confirms by his Oath. \* His threatnings are gracious Expostulations with them, *Why will ye die O house of Israel?* They are like the noise a favourable Officer makes in the Street, to warn the Criminal he comes to seize upon, to make his escape: He never used his Justice to crush Men, till he had used his Kindness to allure them. All the dreadful descriptions of a future Wrath, as well as the lively descriptions of the happiness of another World, are designed to persuade Men: The Honey of his Goodness is in the Bowels of those roaring Lyons; such pains doth Goodness take with Men, to make them Candidates for Heaven.

2. *How readily doth he receive Men, when they do return?* We have Davids Experience for it; † *I said, I will confess my Transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my Sin, Selah.* A sincere look from the Creature draws out his Arms, and opens his Bosom; he is ready with his Physick to heal us, upon a resolution to acquaint him with our Disease, and by his Medicines prevents the putting our Resolution into a Petition. The Psalmist adds a *Selah* to it, as a special Note of Thankfulness for Divine Goodness. He doth not only stand ready to receive our Petitions, while we are speaking, but *answers us before we call*; \* listening to the Motions of our Hearts, as well as to the supplications of our Lips: He is the true Father, that hath a quicker pace in meeting, than the Prodigal hath in returning; Who would not have his Embraces and Caresses interrupted by his Confession; † The Confession follows, doth not precede the Fathers Compassion. How doth he rejoyce in having an opportunity to express his Grace, when he hath prevail'd with a Rebel to throw down his Arms and lie at his Feet; and this because *he delights in Mercy*? \* He delights in the Expressions of it from himself, and the acceptance of it by his Creature.

3. *How meltingly doth he bewail Mans wilful refusal of his Goodness?* 'Tis a mighty Goodness to offer Grace to a Rebel, a mighty Goodness to give it him after he hath a while stood off from the terms: An astonishing Goodness to regret and lament his wilful perdition. He seems to utter those words in a sigh, † *Oh that my People had hearkned unto me, and Israel had walked in my way!* 'Tis true, God hath not Humane Passions, but his Affections can not be express'd otherwise in a way intelligible to us: The Excellency of his Nature is above the Passions of Men, but such Expressions of himself manifest to us the sincerity of his Goodness; and that were he capable of our Passions, he would express himself in such a manner as we do. And we find incarnate Goodness bewailing with tears and sighs the ruine of *Jerusalem*: \* By the same reason that when a Sinner returns, there is joy in Heaven, upon his obstinacy there is sorrow in Earth. The one is as if a Prince should Cloth all his Court in Triumphant Scarlet upon a Rebels Repentance: And the other, as if a Prince should put himself, and his Court in Mourning for a Rebels obstinate refusal of a Pardon, when he lies at his Mercy. Are not now these affectionate invitations, and deep bewailings of their perversity high Testimonies of Divine Goodness? Do not the unwearied repetitions of Gracious Encouragements deserve a higher name than that of meer Goodness? What can be a stronger Evidence of the sincerity of it, than the sound of his saving voice in our enjoyments, the motion of his Spirit in our hearts, and his grief for the neglect of all? These are not Testimonies of any want of Goodness in his Nature to answer us, or willingness to express it to his Crea-



Creature. Hath he any mind to deceive us, that thus entreats us? The Majesty of his Nature is too great for such shifts; or if it were not, the despicableness of our condition would render him above the using any. Who would charge that Physician with want of kindness, that freely offers his Sovereign Medicine, importunes Men by the love they have to their health to take it, and is dissolved into tears and sorrow, when he finds it rejected by their peevish and conceited humor?

7. *Divine Goodness is eminent in the Sacraments he hath affixt to this Covenant, especially in the Lords Supper.* As he gave himself in his Son, so he gives his Son in the Sacrament; He doth not only give him as a Sacrifice upon the Cross for the Expiation of our Crimes, but as a Feast upon the Table for the nourishment of our Souls: In the one he was given to be offer'd; in this he gives him to be partak'd of, with all the Fruits of his Death: Under the Image of the Sacramental Signs, every Believer doth eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood of the great Mediator of the Covenant. The words of Christ, *This is my Body, and this is my Blood*, are true to the end of the World\*. This is the most delicious Viand of Heaven, the most exquisite Dainty Food, God can feed us with; the delight of the Deity, the admiration of Angels: A Feast with God is great, but a Feast on God is greater. Under those Signs that Body is presented; that which was conceived by the Spirit, inhabited by the Godhead, bruised by the Father to be our Food, as well as our Propitiation, is presented to us on the Table: That Blood which satisfied Justice, wash'd away our guilt on the Cross, and pleads for our Persons at the Throne of Grace: That Blood which silenc'd the Curse, pacifi'd Heaven, and purg'd Earth, is given to us for our refreshment. This is the *Bread sent from Heaven*, the true *Manna*; The Cup is *the Cup of Blessing*, and therefore a Cup of Goodness†. 'Tis true, Bread doth not cease to be Bread, nor the Wine cease to be Wine; neither of them lose their Substance, but both acquire a Sanctification, by the relation they have to that which they represent, and give a nourishment to that Faith that receives them. In those God offers us a Remedy for the Sting of Sin, and troubles of Conscience: He gives us not the Blood of a meer Man, or the Blood of an incarnate Angel, but of God blessed for ever: A Blood that can secure us against the wrath of Heaven, and the tumults of our Consciencies: A Blood that can wash away our Sins, and beautifie our Souls: A Blood that hath more strength than our Filth, and more prevalency than our Accuser: A Blood that secures us against the terrours of Death, and purifies us for the Blessedness of Heaven. The Goodness of God complies with our senses, and condescends to our weakness: He instructs us by the Eye, as well as by the Ear: He lets us see, and taste, and feel him, as well as hear him: He veils his Glory under Earthly Elements, and informs our understanding in the Mysteries of Salvation by signs familiar to our Senses; and because we cannot with our Bodily Eyes behold him in his Glory, he presents him to the Eyes of our Minds in Elements, to affect our understandings in the representations of his Death. The Body of Christ Crucified is more visible to our Spiritual sense, than the invisible Deity could be visible in his Flesh upon Earth: And the Power of his Body and Blood is as well experimented in our Souls, as the power of his Divinity was seen by the *Jews* in his miraculous actions in his Body in the World. 'Tis the Goodness of God, to mind us frequently of the great things Christ hath purchased; That as himself would not let them be out of his mind, to communicate them to us, so he would give us means to preserve them in our minds, to adore him for them, and request them of him; whereby he doth evidence his own sollicitousness, that we should not be depriv'd by our own forgetfulness of that Grace, Christ hath purchased for us: It was to remember the Redeemer, and shew his Death till he came\*.

\* Matth. 25.  
26, 28.

† 1 Cor. 10:  
15.

\* 1 Cor. 11:  
26, 26.

1. His



1. *His Goodness is seen in the end of it, which is a sealing the Covenant of Grace.* \* The common Nature and End of Sacraments is to seal the Covenant they belong to, and the truths of the Promises of it. The legal Sacraments of Circumcision and the Passover sealed the legal Promises and the Covenant in the Judaical Administration of it: And the Evangelical Sacraments seal the Evangelical Promises, as a Ring confirms a contract of Marriage, and a Seal the Articles of a Compact: By the same reason Circumcision is call'd a *Seal of the Righteousness of Faith* †, other Sacraments may have the same Title: God doth attest, that he will remain firm in his Promise, and the Receiver attests he will remain firm in his Faith. In all Reciprocal Covenants there are mutual Engagements, and that which serves for a Seal on the part of the one, serves for a Seal also on the part of the other: God obligeth himself to the performance of the Promise, and Man engageth himself to the performance of his Duty. The thing confirm'd by this Sacrament is the perpetuity of this Covenant in the Blood of Christ, whence it is called *the New Testament*, or *Covenant in the Blood of Christ* \*. In every repetition of it, God by presenting confirms his resolution to us, of sticking to this Covenant for the Merit of Christs Blood; and the Receiver by eating the Body, and drinking the Blood, engageth himself to keep close to the Condition of Faith, expecting a full Salvation, and a blessed Immortality upon the Merit of the same Blood alone. This Sacrament could not be called the *New Testament* or *Covenant*, if it had not some relation to the Covenant; and what it can be but this, I do not understand.

† Heb. 9. 15. The Covenant it self was confirm'd by the Death of Christ †, and thereby made unchangeable both in the Benefits to us, and the Condition requir'd of us; but he seals it to our sense in a Sacrament to give us strong consolation: Or rather the Articles of the Covenant of Redemption between the Father and the Son, agreed on from Eternity, were accomplish'd on Christs part by his Death, on the Fathers part by his Resurrection; Christ performed what he promis'd in the one, and God acknowledgeth the validity of it, and performs what he had promis'd in the other. The Covenant of Grace founded upon this Covenant of Redemption is sealed in the Sacrament; God owns his standing to the terms of it, as sealed by the Blood of the Mediator, by presenting him to us under those Signs, and gives us a right upon Faith to the enjoyment of the Fruits of it: As the right of a House is made over by the delivery of the Key, and the right of Land translated by the delivery of a Turf; whereby he gives us assurance of his reality, and a strong support to our confidence in him; Not that there is any vertue and power of sealing in the Elements themselves, no more than there is in a Turf, to give an Infeoffment in a parcel of Land; but as the power of the one is derived from the Order of the Law, so the confirming power of the Sacrament is deriv'd from the Institution of God. As the Oyl wherewith Kings were anointed, did not of it self confer upon them that Royal Dignity, but it was a sign of their investiture into Office, order'd by Divine Institution. We can with no reason imagine, that God intended them as naked Signs or Pictures, to please our Eyes with the Image of them, to represent their own Figures to our Eyes, but to confirm something to our understanding by the Efficacy of the Spirit accompanying them \*: They convey to the Believing Receiver, what they represent, as the great Seal of a Prince fixed to the Parchment, doth the Pardon of the Rebel as well as its own Figure. Christs Death, and the Grace of the Covenant is not only signified, but the Fruits and Merit of that Death communicated also. Thus doth Divine Goodness evidence it self, not only in making a Gracious Covenant with us, but fixing Seals to it; not to strengthen his own Obligation, which stood stronger than the Foundations of Heaven and Earth, upon the Credit of his Word, but to strengthen our weakness, and support our security, by something which might appear more formal and solemn than a bare word. By this, the Divine Goodness provides

\* Argual.  
1. Cor. 10. 16.  
15. 17.

† Rom. 4. 11.

\* Luke 22. 20.

† Heb. 9. 15.

\* 1. Cor. 10. 16.  
15. 17.



vides against our Spiritual faintings, and shews us by real Signs as well as Verbal Declarations, that the Covenant sealed by the Blood of Christ, is unalterable; and thereby would fortifie and mount our hopes to degrees in some measure suitable to the kindness of the Covenant, and the dignity of the Redeemer's Blood. And it's yet a further degree of his Goodness, that he hath appointed us so often to Celebrate it, whereby he shews, how careful he is to keep up our tottering Faith, and preserve us constant in our obedience; obliging himself to the performance of his Promise, and obliging us to the payment of our Duty.

2. His Goodness is seen in the Sacrament *in giving us in it an union and communion with Christ*. There is not only a *Commemoration* of Christ dying, but a *Communication* of Christ living. The Apostle strongly asserts it by way of Interrogation, \* *The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?* In the Cup there is a communication of the Blood of Christ, a conveyance of a Right to the Merits of his Death, and the Blessedness of his Life: We are not less by this made one Body with Christ, than we are by *Baptism*: † And put on Christ living in this, as well as in Baptism; \* That as his taking our infirm Flesh, was a real Incarnation, so the giving us his Flesh to eat, is a Mystical Incarnation in Believers, whereby they become one Body with him as Crucified, and one Body with him as Risen; For if Christ himself be receiv'd by Faith in the Word, † He is no less received by Faith in the Sacrament. When the Holy Ghost is said to be receiv'd, the Graces or Gifts of the Holy Ghost are receiv'd; So when Christ is receiv'd, the Fruits of his Death are really partaken of. The *Israelites* that eat of the Sacrifices, did *partake of the Altar*\*, i. e. had a communion with the God of *Israel*, to whom they had been Sacrificed; and those that eat of the Sacrifices offer'd to Idols, had a *fellowship with Devils*, to whom those Sacrifices were offer'd, *Verse 20*. Those that partake of the Sacraments in a due manner, have a communion with that God to whom it was Sacrificed, and a communion with that Body which was Sacrificed to God; Not that the Substance of that Body and Blood is wrapped up in the Elements, or that the Bread and Wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ, but as they represent him, and by vertue of the Institution are in Estimation himself, his own Body and Blood; by the same reason as he is call'd *Christ our Passover*, he may be call'd *Christ our Supper* †: For as they are so reckon'd to an unworthy Receiver, as if they were the real Body and Blood of Christ, because by his not discerning the Lords Body in it, or making light of it as common Bread, he is judged *guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ*, guilty of treating him in as base a manner as the *Jews* did when they Crown'd him with Thorns: \* By the same reason they must be reckon'd to a worthy Receiver, as the very Body and Blood of Christ: So that as the unworthy Receiver *eats and drinks Damnation*; the worthy Receiver *eats and drinks Salvation*. It would be an empty Mystery, and unworthy of an Institution by Divine Goodness, if there were not some communion with Christ in it: There would be some kind of deceit in the Precept, *Take, Eat, and Drink, this is my Body and Blood*, a conveyance of Spiritual vital influences to our Souls: For the natural End of eating and drinking is the nourishment and increase of the Body, and preservation of Life, by that which we eat and drink. The infinite Wise, gracious and true God, would never give us empty Figures without accomplishing that which is signified by them, and suitable to them. How great is this Goodness of God? he would have his Son in us, one with us, straitly joyn'd to us, as if we were his proper Flesh and Blood: In the Incarnation Divine Goodness united him to our Nature; in the Sacrament, it doth in a sort unite him with his purchas'd Priviledges to our Persons; we have not a communion with a part or a Member of his Body, or a drop

\* 1 Cor.

† 1 Cor. 12.

\* Gal. 3. 27.

† Colos. 2. 6.

\* 1 Cor. 10.

† 1 Cor. 5. 7.

\* 1 Cor. 11. 27-29.



of his Blood, but with his whole Body and Blood, represented in every part of the Elements. The Angels in the Heaven enjoy not so great a privilege; They have the honour to be under him as their Head, but not that of having him for their Food; they behold him, but they do not taste him. And certainly that Goodness that hath condescended so much to our weakness, would impart it to us in a very glorious manner, were we capable of it. But because a Man cannot behold the Light of the Sun in its full splendor by reason of the infirmities of his Eyes, he must behold it by the help of a Glass, and such a communication through a coloured and Opaque-glass, is as real from the Sun it self, though not so glorious, but more shrowded and obscure; 'Tis the same light that shines through that Medium, as spreads it self gloriously in the open Air, though the one be maskt, and the other open-fac'd.

To conclude this, by the way we may take notice of the *neglect of this Ordinance*: If it be a token of Divine Goodness to appoint it, 'tis no sign of our estimation of Divine Goodness to neglect it. He that values the kindness of his friend, will accept of his invitation, if there be not some strong impediments in the way, or so much familiarity with him that his refusal upon a light occasion would not be unkindly taken. But though God put on the disposition of a Friend to us, yet he looseth not the authority of a Sovereign; and the humble familiarity he invites us to, doth not diminish the condition and duty of a Subject. A Sovereign Prince would not take it well, if a Favourite should refuse the offer'd honour of his Table. The Vindict of God are not to be slighted. Can we live better upon our poor pittance, than upon his Dainties? Did not Divine Goodness condescend in it to, the weakness of our Faith, and shall we conceit our Faith stronger than God thinks it? If he thought fit by those Seals to make a Deed of Gift to us, shall we be so unmannerly to him, and such enemies to the security he offers us over and above his word, as not to accept it? Are we unwilling to have our Souls enflamed with love, our Hearts filled with comfort, and arm'd against the attempts of our Enemies? 'Tis true, there is a guilt of the Body and Bloud of Christ contracted by a slowness in the manner of attending; Is it not also contracted by a refusal and neglect? What is the language of it? If it speaks not the death of Christ in vain, it speaks the institution of this Ordinance as a remembrance of his death to be a vanity, and no mark of Divine Goodness. Let us therefore put such a value upon Divine Goodness in this affair, as to be willing to receive the conveyances of his love, and fresh engagements of our duty; the one is due from us to the kindness of our Friend, and the other belongs to our duty as his Subjects.

6. By this Redemption God restores us to a more excellent condition than Adam had in Innocence. Christ was sent by Divine Goodness, not only to restore the Life Adam's sin had stript us of, but to give it more abundantly than Adam, standing could have conveyed it to us, \* *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* More abundantly for strength, more abundantly for duration, a life abounding with greater felicity, and glory: The substance of those better Promises of the *New Covenant*, than what attended the old. There are fuller Streams of Grace by Christ, than flowed to Adam, or could flow from Adam. As Christ never restored any to health and strength, while he was in the World, but he gave them a greater measure of both than they had before; so there is the same kindness no question manifested in our Spiritual condition. Adam's life might have preserv'd us; but Adam's death could not have rescued either Himself or his Posterity; but in our Redemption, we have a Redeemer, who hath died to expiate our sins, and so Crowned with life to save, and for ever preserve our persons \* *Because I live, ye shall live also*: So that by *Redeeming Goodness* the life of a Believer is as perpetual as the life of the Redeemer Christ. † Adam though Innocent was under the danger

\* Joh. 10. 10.

Rom. 5. 10.

† Joh. 1. 4. 19.



ger of perishing; a Believer though culpable, is above the fears of Mutability. *Adam* had a holiness in his Nature, but capable of being lost; by *Christ* Believers have a holiness bestowed, not capable of being rilled, but which will remain, till it be at last fully perfected: Though they have a power to change in their Nature; yet they are above an actual final change by the indulgence of Divine Grace. *Adam* stood by himself, Believers stand in a Root impossible to be shaken, or corrupted: By this means the promise is sure to all the Seed. \* Christ is a stronger person than *Adam*, who can never break Covenant with God, and the truth of God will never break Covenant with him. We are united to a more excellent head than *Adam*. Instead of a Root meerly Humane, we have a Root Divine, as well as Humane. In him we had the Righteousness of a Creature meerly Humane; In this we have a Righteousness Divine, the Righteousness of God-man; the stock is no longer in our own hands, but in the hands of one that cannot imbezzle it, or forfeit it. Divine Goodness hath deposited it strongly for our security. The stamp we receive by the Divine Goodness from the second *Adam*, is more noble, than that we should have received from the first, had he remained in his created State: *Adam* was formed of the Dust of the Earth, and the New Man is formed by the incorruptible Seed of the word. And at the Resurrection the Body of Man shall be endued with better qualities than *Adam* had at Creation. They shall be like that glorious Body, which is in Heaven in union with the person of the Son of God. \* *Adam* at the best had but an Earthly Body, but the Lord from Heaven hath a Heavenly Body, the Image of which shall be born by the Redeemed Ones, as they have born the Image of the Earthly \*. *Adam* had the Society of Beasts, Redeemed ones expect by Divine Goodness in Redemption a commerce with Angels; as they are reconciled to them by his death, they shall certainly come to converse with them at the consummation of their happiness. As they are made of one Family, so they will have a peculiar intimacy. *Adam* had a Paradise, and Redeem'd Ones a Heaven provided for them, a happier place with a richer furniture. 'Tis much to give so compleat a Paradise to innocent *Adam*; but more to give Heaven to an ungrateful *Adam*, and his Rebellious Posterity. It had been abundant Goodness, to have restor'd us to the same condition in that Paradise, from whence we were ejected; but a super-abundant Goodness, to bestow upon us a better habitation in Heaven, which we could never have expected. How great is that Goodness, when by sin we were fallen to be worse than nothing, that he should raise us to be more than what we were! That restor'd us, not to the first step of our Creation, but to many degrees of elevation beyond it. Not only restores us, but prefers us, not only striking off our Chains, to set us free, but cloathing us with a Robe of Righteousness, to render us honourable. Not only quenching our Hell, but preparing a Heaven; not regarnishing an earthly, but providing a richer Palace: His Goodness was so great, that after it had rescued us, it would not content it self with the old furniture, but makes all new for us in another World: A new Wine to drink; a new Heaven to dwell in; a more magnificent Structure for our Habitation; Thus hath Goodness prepared for us a straiter Union, a stronger Life, a purer Righteousness, an unshaken Standing, and a fuller Glory. All more excellent then was within the compass of innocent *Adam*'s Possession.

\* Rom. 8. 16.

\* Phil. 3. 21.

\* Cor. 1. 15.  
47, 48, 49.

7. This Goodness in Redemption extends it self to the lower Creation. It takes in not only Man, but the whole Creation, except the Fallen Angels, and gives a participation of it to insensible Creatures; upon the account of this Redemption the Sun and all kind of Creatures were preserv'd, which otherwise had sunk into destruction upon the sin of Man, and ceas'd from their Being, as Man had utterly ceas'd from his Happiness. \* By him all things consist. The Fall of Man brought not only a misery upon himself, but a Vanity upon the Creature: The Earth groaned under a Curse for his sake. They

\* Colos. 1. 17.



were all created for the Glory of God, and the support of Man in the performance of his duty, who was obliged to use them for the honour of him that created them both. Had Man been true to his obligations, and used the Creatures for that end, to which they were dedicated by the Creator; As God would have then rejoiced in his Works, so his Works would have rejoiced in the honour of answering so excellent an end. But when Man lost his integrity, the Creatures lost their Perfection; the honour of them was stain'd when they were debas'd to serve the Lusts of a Traytor, instead of supporting the Duty of a Subject, and employed in the defence of the Vices of Men against the Precepts and Authority of their common Sovereign. This was a vilifying the Creature, as it would be a vilifying the Sword of a Prince, which is for the maintenance of Justice, to be used for the Murder of an Innocent; and a dishonouring a Royal Mansion, to make it a Storehouse for a Dunghil. Had those things the benefit of sense, they would groan under this disgrace, and rise up in indignation against them, that offered them this affront, and turned them from their proper end. When sin entered, the Heavens that were made to shine upon Man, and the Earth that was made to bear and nourish an innocent Creature, were now subjected to serve a rebellious Creature. And as Man turn'd against God, so he made those instruments against God, to serve his Enmity, Luxury, Sensuality. Hence the Creatures are said to groan, \* *The whole Creation groans and travels in pain together until now.* They would really groan, had they understanding to be sensible of the Outrage done them.

\* Rom. 8. 22.

*The whole Creation,* 'Tis the pang of universal Nature, the agony of the whole Creation, to be alienated from the original use for which they were intended, and be disjointed from their end, to serve the disloyalty of a Rebel. The Drunkards Cup, and the Gluttons Table, the Adulterers Bed, and the proud Mans Purple would groan against the abuser of them. But when all the fruits of Redemption shall be compleated, the Goodness of God shall pour it self upon the Creatures, deliver them from the *Bondage of Corruption into the glorious liberty of the Children of God*\*, they shall be reduced to their true end, and return'd in their original harmony. As the Creation doth passionately groan under its vanity, so it doth *earnestly expect and wait for its deliverance at the time of the manifestation of the Sons of God.* The manifestation of the Sons of God is the attainment of the liberty of the Creature. They shall be freed from the vanity under which they are enslav'd. As it entered by sin, it shall vanish upon the total removal of sin. What use they were design'd for in Paradise, they will have afterwards, except that of the nourishment of Men, who shall be as *Angels, neither eating nor drinking.* The Glory of God shall be seen and contemplated in them. It can hardly be thought that God made the World to be little a moment after he had reard it, sullied by the Sin of Man, and turn'd from its original end, without thoughts of a restoration of it to its true end, as well as Man to his lost happiness. The World was made for Man: Man hath not yet enjoyed the Creature in the first intention of them; Sin made an interruption in that Fruition. As *Redemption* restores Man to his true end, so it restores the Creatures to their true use. The restoration of the World to its beauty and order, was the design of the Divine Goodness in the coming of Christ, as it is intimated in *Isaiah 11. 6, 7, 8, 9.* As he came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it, so he came not to destroy the Creatures, but to repair them. To restore to God the honour and pleasure of the Creation, and restore to the Creatures their felicity in restoring their Order. The Fall corrupted it, and the full Redemption of Men restores it. The last time is called not a time of destruction, but a *time of restitution*, and that of *all things* \* of universal nature, the main part of the Creation at least. All those things which were the effects of sin, will be abolisht; the removal of the Cause beats down the effect. The disorder and unruliness of the Creature arising from the venom of Mans transgression, all the fierceness of one Creature against

\* Rom. 8. 21.

\* V. 19.

\* Acts. 3. 21.



against another shall vanish. The World shall be nothing but an universal finile; Nature shall put on triumphant Vestments: There shall be no affrighting Thunders, choaking Mists, venomous Vapours, or poysonous Plants. It would not else be a restitution of all things. They are now subject to be wasted by Judgments for the sin of their Possessor, but the perfection of Mans Redemptions shall free them from every misery. They have an advancement at the present; for they are under a more glorious head, as being the possession of *Christ* the heavenly *Adam* much superiour to the first: As it's the glory of a person to be a Servant to a Prince, rather than a Peasant. And afterwards they shall be elevated to a better state, sharing in Man's happiness, as well as they did in his misery; As Servants are interested in the good Fortune of their Master, and better'd by his advance in his Princes favour. As Man in his first Creation was mutable and liable to sin, so the Creatures were liable to vanity; But as Man by Grace shall be freed from the Mutability, so shall the Creatures be freed from the fears of an Invasion, by the vanity that sully'd them before. The condition of the Servants shall be suited to that of their Lord, for whom they were design'd: Hence all Creatures are call'd upon to *re-joice* upon the Perfection of Salvation, and the appearance of Christs Royal Authority in the World. \* If they were to be destroyed, there would be no ground to invite them to triumph. Thus doth Divine Goodness spread its kind Arms over the whole Creation.

\* Psal. 96. 11.  
12.  
Psal. 98. 7, 8.

3. *The third thing is the Goodness of God in his Government.* That Goodness that despised not their Creation, doth not despise their conduct. The same Goodness that was the head that fram'd them, is the helm that guides them; his Goodness hovers over the whole frame, either to prevent any wild disorders unsuitable to his Creating end, or to conduct them to those ends which might illustrate his Wisdom and Goodness to his Creatures. His Goodness doth no less incline him to provide for them, than to frame them. 'Tis the natural inclination of man to love what is purely the birth of his own strength or skill. He is fond of preserving his own Inventions, as well as laborious in inventing them. 'Tis the glory of a Man to preserve them, as well as to produce them. God loves every thing which he hath made, which love could not be without a continued diffusiveness to them, suitable to the end for which he made them. It would be a vain Goodness, if it did not interest it self in *managing* the World, as well as *erecting* it: Without his Government every thing in the World would jostle against one another: The beauty of it would be more defaced, it would be an unruly Mass, a confus'd Chaos rather than a κόσμος, a comely World. If Divine Goodness respected it when it was nothing, it would much more respect it when it was something by the sole vertue of his Power and good Will to it, without any motive from any thing else than Himself, because there was nothing else but Himself. But since he sees his own stamp in things without Himself in the Creature, which is a kind of motive or moving Object to Divine Goodness to preserve it, when there was nothing without Himself, that could be any motive to Him, to Create it: As when God hath created a Creature, and it falls into misery, that misery of the Creature, though it doth not necessitate his mercy, yet meeting with such an affection as mercy in his Nature, is a moving Object to excite it: As the repentance of *Nineveh* drew forth the exercise of his pity and preserving goodness. Certainly since God is Good, he is Bountiful, and if Bountiful, he is Provident. He would seem to envy and malign his Creatures, if he did not provide for them, while he intends to use them: But infinite Goodness cannot be affected with envy: For all envy implies a want of that good in our selves, which we regard with so evil an eye in another. But God being infinitely blessed, hath not the want of any good, that can be a rise to such an uncomely disposition. The *Jews* thought that Divine Goodness extended only to them in an immediate and particular Care, and left all other Nations and things to the guidance of Angels.

But



But the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* 107. a *Psal.* calculated for the celebration of this Perfection, in the continued course of his *Providence* throughout all Ages of the World, ascribes to Divine Goodness immediately all the advantages men meet with. He helps them in their actions, presides over their motions, inspects their several conditions, labours day and night in a perpetual care of them. The whole life of the World is linkt together by *Divine Goodness*. Every thing is ordered by him in the place where he hath set it, without which the World would be stript of that Excellency it hath by Creation.

1. First, *This Goodness is evident in the Care he hath of all Creatures*. There is a peculiar goodness to his People; but this takes not away his general goodness to the World: Though a Master of a Family hath a choicer affection to those that have an Affinity to him in Nature, and stand in a nearer Relation, as his Wife, Children, Servants; yet he hath a regard to his Cattle, and other Creatures he nourisheth in his House. All things are not only before his eyes, but in his Bosom; He is the Nurse of all Creatures, supplying their wants, and sustaining them from that nothing they tend to. \* The Earth is full of his Riches, not a creek or cranny but partakes of it. Abundant Goodness daily hovers over it, as well as hatcht it. \* The whole World swims in the rich Bounty of the Creator, as the Fish do in the largeness of the Sea, and Birds in the spaciousness of the Air. The Goodness of God is the River, that Waters the whole Earth. As a lifeless Picture casts its eye upon every one in the Room, so doth a living God upon every thing in the World. And as the Sun illuminates all things which are capable of partaking of its light, and diffuseth its Beams to all things which are capable of receiving them; So doth God spread his Wings over the whole Creation, and neglects nothing, wherein he sees a mark of his first creating Goodness.
- \* *Psal.* 104. 24. \* *Gulielmus Præsen.* p. 254.
- \* *Psal.* 36. 6. His Goodness is seen, 1. In preserving all things. \* Oh Lord thou preservest Man and Beast. Not only Man, but Beasts, and Beasts as well as Men. Man, as the most excellent Creature, and Beasts as being serviceable to Man, and Instruments of his Worldly Happiness. He continues the Species of all things, concurs with them in their distinct Offices, and quickens the Womb of Nature. He visits Man every day, and makes him feel the effects of his Providence, in giving him fruitful seasons, and filling his heart with food and gladness\*, as witnesses of his Liberality and Kindness to Man. The Earth is visited and watered by the River of God. He settles the furrows of the Earth, and makes it soft with showers, that the Corn may be nourished in its Womb, and spring up to Maturity. He crowns the year with his Goodness, and his paths drop fatness. The little Hills rejoice on every side; The Pastures are clothed with Flocks, and the Vallies are covered over with Corn, as the *Psalmist* elegantly\*. He waters the ground by his Showers, and preserves the little Seed from the Rapine of Animals. He draws not out the evil Arrows of Famine, as the expression is\*. Every day shines with new Beams of his Divine Goodness. The vastness of this City, and the multitudes of living Souls in it, is an astonishing Argument. What streams of nourishing necessities are daily convey'd to it? Every Mouth hath Bread to sustain it, and among all the number of Poor in the Bowels and Skirts of it, how rare is it to hear of any starv'd to death for want of it? Every day he spreads a Table for us, and that with varieties; and fills our Cups\*. He shortens not his hand, nor withdraws his Bounty: The Increase of one year by his Blessing, restores what was spent by the former. He is the strength of our life\*, continuing the vigour of our Limbs, and the health of our Bodies; secures us from terrors by night, and the Arrows of Diseases that fly by day\*. Sets a hedge about our Estates\*, and defends them against the attempts of violence. Preserves our Houses from flames that might consume them, and our persons from the dangers that lie in wait for them. Watcheth over us in our goings out, and our comings in\*; and way-lays a Thousand dangers we know not of. And em-
- \* *Psal.* 65. 9. 10. & *Psal.* 107. 35. 36. \* *Ezek.* 5. 16.
- \* *Psal.* 23. 5.
- \* *Psal.* 27. 1.
- \* *Psal.* 91. 5.
- \* *Job* 1. 10.
- \* *Psal.* 121. 8.



employs the most glorious *Creatures in Heaven*, in the service of mean *Men upon Earth*\*: Not by a faint Order, but a pressing *Charge* over them, to keep them in all his ways. Those that are his immediate Servants before his Throne, he sends to Minister to them, that were once his Rebels. By an *Angel* he conducted the affairs of *Abraham*\*: And by an *Angel* secur'd the life of *Ismael*†: Glorious Angels for mean Man, Holy Angels for impure Man, Powerful Angels for weak Man. How in the midst of great dangers, doth his sudden light dissipate our great darkness, and create a deliverance out of nothing? How often is he found a present help in time of trouble? When all other assistance seems to stand at a distance, He flies to us beyond our expectations, and raises us upon the sudden from the pit of our dejectedness, as well as that of our danger, exceeding our wishes, and shooting beyond our desires as well as our deserts. How often in a time of confusion, doth he preserve an indefensible place from the attacks of Enemies, like a spark in the midst of a tempestuous Sea? the rage falls upon other places round about them, and by a secret Efficacy of Divine Goodness is not able to touch them. He hath peculiar preservations for his *Israel in Egypt*, and his *Lots in Sodom*, his *Daniels in the Lyons Dens*, and his *Children in a fiery Furnace*. He hath a tenderness for all, but a peculiar affection to those that are in Covenant with him.

2. The Goodness of God is seen in taking care of the *Animals and inanimate things*. Divine Goodness embraceth in its arms the lowest Worm as well as the loftiest Cherubin: He provides Food for the *Crying Ravens*, \* and a Prey for the Appetite of the *hungry Lyon* †: He opens his hand, and fills with good those innumerable *Creeping things*, both small and great Beasts, they are all matters upon him, and all are satisfied by their bountiful Master\*. They are better provided for by the Hand of Heaven, than the best favourite is by an Earthly Prince: For they are fill'd with good. He hath made Channels in the wildest Deserts for the watering of Beasts, and Trees for the Nests and Habitation of Birds\*. As a Law-giver to the *Jews*, he took care, that the poor Beast should not be abused by the cruelty of Man: He provided for the ease of the labouring Beast in that Command of the Sabbath, wherein he provided for his own service: The Cattle was to do no work on it\*. He order'd that the mouth of the Ox should not be Muzzled, while it trod out the Corn, † (it being the manner of those Countreys to separate the Corn from the Stalk by that means, as we do in this by Thrashing) regarding it as a part of Cruelty to deprive the poor Beast of tasting, and satisfying it self with that, which he was so officious by his labour to prepare for the use of Man. And when any met with a Nest of young Birds, though they might take the young to their use, they were forbidden to seize upon upon the Dam, that she might not lose the Objects of her Affection and her own liberty in one day\*.

And see how God enforceth this Precept with a threatening of a shortness of life, if they transgress it? \* Thou shalt let the Dam go, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days. He would revenge the Cruelty to Dumb Creatures with the shortness of the Oppressors life: Nor would he have Cruelty used to Creatures that were separated for his Worship: He therefore provides, that a Cow, or an Ewe, and their young ones should not be killed for Sacrifice in one day\*. All which Precepts, say the *Jews*, are to teach Men Mercifulness to their Beasts; so much doth Divine Goodness bow down it self, to take notice of those mean Creatures, which Men have so little regard to, but for their own advantage: Yea, he is so good, that he would have Worship declin'd for a time in favour of a distressed Beast; the helping a Sheep, or an Ox, or an Ass out of a Pit, was indulged them even on the Sabbath-day, a day God had peculiarly Sanctified and order'd for his Service: \* In this case he seems to remit for a time the Rights of the Deity

\* Psal. 91. 11.

\* Gen. 24. 7.

† Gen. 21. 17.

\* Psal. 147. 9.

† Ps. 104. 21.

\* Psal. 104. 25, 26, 27, 28.

\* Psal. 104. 10, 12, 17.

\* Ex. 20. 10.

† Deut. 25. 4.

\* Deut. 22. 6.

\* Deut. 22. 7.

\* Lev. 22. 28.

\* Matth. 12. 11.  
Luke 14. 5.



\* Matth. 6.  
18, 19.

Deity for the rescue of a meer Animal. His Goodness extends not only to those kind of Creatures that have life, but to the insensible ones; He clothes the Grass, and arrays the *Lilies of the Field* with a greater glory, than *Solomon* had upon his Throne\*; And such care he had of those *Trees* which bore Fruit for the maintenance of Man or Beast, that he forbids any injury to be offer'd to them, and bars the Rapine and Violence, which by Soldiers useth to be practised, *Deut* 20. 19. though it were to promote the conquest of their Enemy. How much Goodness is it, that he should think of so small a thing as Man! How much more that he should concern himself in things, that seem so petty as Beasts and Trees! Persons seated in a Sovereign Throne, think it a debasing of their Dignity to regard little things: But God, who is infinitely greater in Majesty above the mightiest Potentate, and the highest Angel, yet is so infinitely good, as to employ his Divine thoughts about the meanest things. He who possesses the praises of Angels, leaves not off the care of the meanest Creatures: And that Majesty that dwells in a pure Heaven, and an unconceivable Light, stoops to provide for the ease of those Creatures, that lie and lodge in the Dirt and Dung of the Earth. How should we be careful not to use those unmercifully, which God takes such care of in his Law; and not to distrust that Goodness, that opens his hand so liberally to Creatures of another Rank?

\* Deut. 15.  
18.

\* Exod. 21.  
26, 27.

\* Deut. 23.  
15, 16.

\* Deut. 25. 3.

\* Deut. 20.  
10.

† Lev. 19. 10.

Lev. 23. 22.

\* Ex. 22. 25.

3. The Goodness of God is seen in taking care of the meanest Rational Creatures: As Servants and Criminals. He provided for the liberty of Slaves, and would not have their Chains continue longer than the *seventh year*, unless they would voluntarily continue under the power of their Masters; and that upon pain of his displeasure, and the withdrawing his Blessing\*. And though by the Laws of many Nations, Masters had an absolute power of Life and Death over their Servants, yet God provided that no Member should be lam'd, not an Eye, no nor a Tooth struck out, but the Master was to pay for his folly and fury the price of the liberty of his Servant\*: He would not suffer the abused Servant to be any longer under the power of that Man, that had not Humanity to use him as one of the same Kindred and Blood with himself. And though those Servants might be never so wicked, yet when unjustly afflicted, God would interest himself as their Guardian in their protection and delivery. And when a poor Slave had been provok'd by the severity of his Masters fury, to turn fugitive from him, he was by Divine order not to be delivered up again to his Masters fury, but dwell in that City and with that Person, to whom he had fled for refuge\*. And when Publick Justice was to be administred upon the lesser sort of Criminals, the Goodness of God order'd the number of blows, not to exceed forty, and left not the fury of Man to measure out the Punishment to excess\*. And in any just quarrel against a provoking and injuring Enemy, he order'd them not to ravage with the Sword, till they had summon'd a Rendition of the place\*. And as great a care he took of the Poor, that they should have the gleanings both of the Vineyard and Field, † and not be forced to pay Usury for the Money lent them\*.

\* Psal. 37. 5.

4. His Goodness is seen in taking care of the wickedest Persons. The Earth is full of his Goodness\*. The wicked as well as the good enjoy it; they that dare lift up their hands against Heaven in the posture of Rebels, as well as those that lift up their Eyes in the condition of suppliants. To do good to a Criminal, far surmounts that goodness that flows down upon an Innocent Object: Now God is not only good to those that have some degrees of goodness, but to those that have the greatest degrees of wickedness, to Men that turn his liberality into affronts of him, and have scarce an appetite to any thing but the violation of his Authority and Goodness. Though upon the fall of Adam we have lost the pleasant habitation of Paradise, and the Creatures made



made for our use are fall'n from their Original Excellency and Sweetness; yet he hath not left the World utterly incommodious for us, but yet stores it with things, not only for the preservation, but delight of those that make their whole lives invectives against this good God. *Manna* fell from Heaven for the *Rebellious* as well as for the Obedient *Israelites*. *Cain* as well as *Abel*, and *Esau* as well as *Jacob* had the influences of his Sun, and the benefits of his Showers. The World is yet a kind of Paradise to the veriest Beasts among Mankind: The Earth affords its Riches, the Heavens its Showers, and the Sun its light to those that injure and Blaspheme him: \* *He makes his Sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.* The wickedest breath in his Air, walk upon his Earth, and drink of his Water as well as the best. The Sun looks with as pleasant and bright an Eye upon a rebellious *Abalom*, as a righteous *David*: The Earth yields its Plants and Medicines to one as well as to the other: 'Tis seldom that he deprives any of the faculties of their Souls, or any Members of their Bodies. God distributes his Blessings, where he might shoot his Thunders, and darts his Light on those who deserve an Eternal Darknels, and presents the good things of the Earth, to those that Merit the Miseries of Hell; for *the Earth and the fulness thereof is the Lords*; \* *Every thing in it is his in Propriety, ours in Trust*: 'Tis *his Corn*, \* *Psalm 104. 14.* *his Wine*; † He never devested himself of the Propriety, though he grants us the Use; And by those good things he supports multitudes of wicked Men, not one or two, but the whole Shoal of them in the World: For he is *the Saviour of all Men*, i. e. is the Preserver of all Men\*. And as he Created \* *1 Tim. 4. 10.* them, when he foresaw they would be wicked, so he provides for them, when he beholds them in their ungodliness. The ingratitude of Men stops not the Current of his Bounty, nor tires his liberal hand; Howsoever unprofitable and injurious Men are to him, he is liberal to them; and his Goodness is the more admirable, by how much the more the unthankfulness of Men is provoking: He sometimes affords to the worst a greater portion of these Earthly Goods; they often swim in Wealth, when others pine away their lives in Poverty. And the Silk-worm yields its bowels to make Purple for Tyrants, while the Oppressed scarce have from the Sheep Wool enough to cover their nakedness; and though he furnish Men with those good things, upon no other account than what Princes do, when they nourish Criminals in a Prison till the time of their Execution, 'tis a Mark of his Goodness. Is it not the kindness of a Prince to treat his Rebels deliciously? To give them the liberty of the Prison, and the enjoyment of the delights of the place, rather than to load their Legs with Fetters, and lodge them in a dark and loathsome Dungeon, till he orders them for their Crime to be conducted to the Scaffold or Gibbet? Since God is thus kind to the vilest Men, whose meanness by reason of Sin is beyond that of any other Creature, as to shoot such rayes of Goodness upon them; How unexpressible would be the Expressions of his Goodness, if the Divine Image were as pure and bright upon them, as it was upon Innocent *Adam*?

2. His Goodness is evident in the preservation of Humane Society. It belongs to his Power that he is able to do it, but to his Goodness that he is willing to do it.

1. This Goodness appears, in prescribing Rules for it. The Moral Law consists but of *Ten Precepts*, and there are more of them order'd for the support of Humane Society, than for the adoration and honour of himself; *Four* \* *Exod. 20. 1, 2.* for the Rights of God, and *Six* for the Rights of Man, and his security in his Authority, Relations, Life, Goods, and Reputation; Superiours not to be dishonoured, Life not to be invaded, Chastity not to be stain'd, Goods not to be filcht, Good Name not to be crackt by False-witness, nor any thing belonging to our Neighbour to be coveted: And in the whole Scripture, not only that which was Calculated for the *Jews*, but compil'd for the whole World, he hath fixt Rules for the ordering all Relations; Magistrates, and Subjects,



Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants, Rich and Poor find their distinct Qualifications and Duties. There would be a Paradisaical State, if Men had a goodness to observe, what God hath had a goodness to order, for the strengthening the Sinews of Humane Society: The World would not groan under oppressing Tyrants, nor Princes tremble under discontented Subjects, or mighty Rebels: Children would not be provoked to anger by the unreasonableness of their Parents, nor Parents sink under grief by the Rebellion of their Children: Masters would not tyrannize over the meanest of their Servants, nor Servants invade the authority of their Masters.

2. The Goodness of God in the preserving Humane Society, is seen in *setting a Magistracy to preserve it*. Magistracy is from God in its Original, the Charter was drawn up in Paradise; Civil subordination must have been, had Man remained in innocence; But the Charter was more explicitly renewed and enlarged at the restoration of the World after the Deluge, and given out to Man under the Broad Seal of Heaven, \* *Whoso sheds Mans Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed*. The Command of shedding the Blood of a Murderer, was a part of his Goodness, to secure the lives of those that bore his Image. Magistrates are *the Shields of the Earth*, but they belong to God \*. They are Fruits of his Goodness in their Original and Authority; Were there no Magistracy, there would be no Government, no security to any Man under his own Vine and Fig-tree; The World would be a Den of wild Beasts preying upon one another, every one would do what seems good in his Eyes; The loss of Government is a Judgment God brings upon a Nation, \* *when Men become as the Fishes of the Sea, to devour one another, because they have no Ruler over them*. Private Dissensions will break out into Publick Disorders and Combustions.

3. The Goodness of God in the preservation of Humane Society, is seen in *the restraints of the Passions of Men*. He sets bounds to the Passions of Men, as well as to the Roulings of the Sea, \* *He stilleth the noise of the Waves, and the tumults of the People*. Though God hath erected a Magistracy to stop the breaking out of those Floods of Licentiousness, which swell in the hearts of Men, yet if God should not hold stiff Reins on the necks of those tumultuous and foaming Passions, the World would be a place of unruly confusion, and Hell Triumph upon Earth: A Crazy State would be quickly broke in pieces by boisterous Nature. The tumults of a People could no more be quell'd by the force of Man, than the rage of the Sea by a puff of breath; Without Divine Goodness, neither the Wisdom nor watchfulness of the Magistrates, nor the industry of Officers could preserve a State. The Laws of Men would be too flight to curb the Lusts of Men, if the Goodness of God did not restrain them by a secret hand, and interweave their Temporal security with observance of those Laws. The Sons of *Belial* did murmur when *Saul* was chosen King; and that they did no more was the Goodness of God, for the preservation of Humane Society. If God did not restrain the impetuousness of Mens Lusts, they would be the entire ruine of Humane Society; their Lusts would render them as bad as Beasts, and change the World into a Savage Wilderness.

4. The Goodness of God is seen in the preservation of Humane Society, in *giving various inclinations to Men for publick advantage*. If all Men had an inclination to one Science or Art, they would all stand idle Spectators of one another; but God hath bestow'd various dispositions and gifts upon Men, for the promoting the common good, that they may not only be useful to themselves, but to Society. He will have none idle, none unuseful, but every one acting in a due place according to their measures for the good of others.

5. The



5. The Goodness of God is seen in the witness he bears against those Sins, that disturb Humane Society. In those cases he is pleased to interest himself in a more signal manner, to cool those that make it their business to overturn the order he hath established for the good of the Earth. He doth not so often in this World punish those faults committed immediately against his own Honour, as those that put the World into a hurry and confusion: As a good Governor is more Merciful to Crimes against himself, than those against his Community. 'Tis observed that the most turbulent seditious Persons in a State, come to most violent ends; As *Corah, Adonijah, Zimri*; *Achitophel* draws *Abalom's* Sword against *David* and *Israel*, and the next is, he twists a Halter for himself. *Abalom* heads a Party against his Father, and God by a goodness to *Israel* hangs him up, and prevents not its safety by *David's* indulgence, and a future Rebellion, had life been spared by the fondness of his Father. His Providence is more evident in discovering Disturbers, and the Causes that move them, in defeating their Enterprizes, and digging the Contrivers out of their Caverns and lurking holes. In such cases, God doth so act, and use such Methods, that he silenceth any Creature from challenging any partnership with him in the discovery. He doth more severely in this World correct those actions, that unlink the mutual assistance between Man and Man, and the charitable and kind Correspondence, he would have kept up. The Sins for which the *Wrath of God comes upon the Children of disobedience* in this World, are of this sort: \* And when Princes will be oppressing the People, God will be pouring contempt on the Princes, and set the poor on high from affliction. \* An evidence of Gods care and kindness in the preserving Humane Society, is those strange discoveries of Murders, though never so clandestine and subtilly committed, more than of any other Crime among Men. Divine Care never appears more, than in bringing those hidden and injurious works of darkness to light, and a due Punishment.

\* Col. 3. 5, 6.

\* Psal. 107.

40, 41.

6. His Goodness is seen in ordering mutual Offices to one another against the Current of Mens Passions. Upon this account he ordered in his Laws for the government of the *Israelites*, that a Man should reduce the wandering Beast of his Enemy, to the hand of his rightful Proprietor, though he were a provoking Enemy; and also help the poor Beast, that belonged to one that hated him, when he saw him sink under his burden\*. When mutual assistance was necessary, he would not have Men consider'd as Enemies, or consider'd as Wicked, but as of the same Blood with our selves, that we might be serviceable to one another for the preservation of Life and Goods.

\* Exod. 23.

4, 5.

7. His Goodness is seen in remitting something of his own Right, for the preserving a due dependance and subjection. He declines the Right he had to the Vows of a Minor or one under the power of another, waving what he might challenge by the voluntary obligation of his Creature, to keep up the due order between Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Superiors and Inferiors; those that were under the power of another, as a Child under his Parents, or a Wife under her Husband, if they had vowed a Vow unto the Lord, which concern'd his Honour and Worship, it was void without the approbation of that person under whose charge they were\*. Though God was the Lord of every Mans Goods, and Men but his Stewards; and though he might have taken to himself, what another had offer'd by a Vow, since whatsoever could be offer'd, was Gods own, though it was not the Parties own, who offer'd it; yet God would not have himself ador'd by his Creature, to the prejudice of the necessary ties of Humane Society: He lays aside what he might challenge by his Sovereign Dominion, that there might not be any breach of that Regular Order, which was necessary for the preservation of the World. If Divine Goodness did not thus order things, he would not do the part of a Rector of the World: The beauty of the World would be much defac'd, it

\* Numb. 30.

3, 4, &amp;c.



would be a confus'd Mass of Men and Women, or rather Beasts and Bedlams. Order renders every City, every Nation, yea, the whole Earth beautiful: This is an effect of Divine Goodness.

\* Jer. 45. 13.

3. His Goodness is evident *in encouraging any thing of Moral Goodness in the World*. Though *Moral Goodness* cannot claim an Eternal Reward, yet it hath been many times rewarded with a Temporal Happiness; He hath often signally rewarded acts of honesty, justice, and fidelity, and punisht the contrary by his Judgments, to deter Man from such an unworthy practice, and encourage others to what was Comely, and of a general good report in the World. *Ahab's* humiliation put a demurrer to Gods Judgments intended against him; and some ascribe the great Victories and success of the *Romans*, to that justice which was observed among themselves. *Baruch* was but an *Amanuensis* to the Prophet *Jeremy*, to write his Prophecy, and very despondent of his own welfare; \* God upon that account provides for his safety, and rewards the industry of his service with the security of his Person; He was not a States-Man, to declare against the corrupt Counsels of them that sat at the Helm; nor a Prophet to declare against their prophane practices; but the Prophets Scribe; and as he writes in Gods service the Prophecies revealed to the Prophet, God writes his name in the Roll of those that were design'd for preservation in that deluge of Judgments, which were to come upon that Nation. *Epicurus* complain'd of the administration of God, that the *Vertuous Moralist* had not sufficient smiles of Divine Favour, nor the *Swinish Sensualist* frowns of Divine Indignation. But what if they have not always that confluence of outward Wealth and Pleasures, but remain in the common level? Yet they have the happiness and satisfaction of a clear Reputation, the esteem of Men, and the secret applauses of their very Enemies; besides the inward ravishments upon an exercise of Vertue, and the commendatory subscription of their own hearts, a dainty the Vicious Man knows not of; They have an inward applause from God as a Reward of Divine Goodness, instead of those Racks of Conscience upon which the Prophane are sometimes stretch'd. He will not let the worst Men do him any service, (though they never intended in the act of service, him, but themselves) without giving them their Wages: He will not let them hit him in the teeth, as if he were beholding to them. If *Nebuchadnezzar* be the instrument of Gods Judgments against *Tyrus* and *Israel*, he will not only give him that rich City, but a richer Country, *Egypt*, the granary for her Neighbours, a wages above his work. In this is Divine Goodness eminent, since in the most Moral actions, as there is something beautiful, so there is something mixt, hateful to the infinitely exact Holiness of the Divine Nature; yet he will not let that which is pleasing to him, go unrewarded, and defeat the expectations of Men, as Men do with those they employ, when for one flaw in an action, they deny them the reward due for the other part. God encourag'd and kept up Morality in the Cities of the Gentiles, for the entertainment of a further goodness in the Doctrine of the Gospel, when it should be publisht among them.

4. Divine Goodness is eminent *in providing a Scripture as a Rule to guide us, and continuing it in the World*. If Man be a Rational Creature governable by a Law, can it be imagin'd there should be no revelation of that Law to him? Man by the light of Reason must needs confess himself to be in another condition than he was by Creation, when he came first out of the hands of God; and can it be thought, that God should keep up the World under so many Sins against the light of Nature, and bestow so many providential influences, to invite Men to return to him, and acquaint no Men in the World with the means of that return? Would he exact an Obedience of Men, as their Consciencies witness he doth, and furnish them with no Rules to guide them in the darkness, they cannot but acknowledge, that they have

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contracted? No, Divine Goodness hath otherwise provided; This *Bible* we have, is his Word and Rule. Had it been a falsity and imposture, would that Goodness that watches over the World, have continued it so long? That Goodness that overthrew the burdensom Rites of *Moses*, and expell'd the foolish Idolatry of the *Pagans*, would have discover'd the imposture of this, had it not been a transcript of his own Will. Whatever mistakes he suffers to remain in the World, what goodness had there been, to suffer this anciently amongst the *Jews*, and afterwards to open it to the whole World, to abuse Men in Religion and Worship, which so nearly concern'd himself and his own Honour, that the World should be deceiv'd by the *Devil* without a remedy in the morning of its appearance? It hath been honour'd and admir'd by some *Heathens*, when they have cast their Eyes upon it, and their natural Light made them behold some footsteps of a Divinity in it. If this therefore be not a Divine Præscript, let any that deny it, bring as good Arguments for any Book else, as can be brought for this. Now the publishing this is an argument of Divine Goodness: 'Tis design'd to win the affections of beggarly Man, to be espous'd to a God of Eternal Blestness, and immense Riches. It speaks words in season; No doubts but it resolves; No Spiritual Distemper but it Cures; No Condition but it hath a Comfort to suit it. 'Tis a Garden which the hand of Divine Bounty hath planted for us; In it he condescends to shadow himself in those Expressions that render him in some manner intelligible to us. Had God wrote in a loftiness of Style suitable to the greatness of his Majesty, his Writing had been as little understood by us, as the brightness of his Glory can be beheld by us. But he draws Phrases from our affairs, to express his mind to us; He incarnates himself in his Word to our Minds, before his Son was incarnate in the Flesh to the Eyes of Men: He ascribes to himself Eyes, Ears, Hands, that we might have from the consideration of our selves, and the whole Humane Nature, a conception of his Perfections: He assumes to himself the Members of our Bodies, to direct our Understandings in the knowledge of his Deity: This is his Goodness.

Again, Though the *Scripture* was written upon several occasions, yet in the dictating of it, the Goodness of God cast his Eye upon the last Ages of the World, \* *They are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the World are come.* It was given to the *Israelites*, but Divine Goodness intended it for the future Gentiles. The old Writings of the Prophets were thus design'd, much more the later Writings of the *Apostles*. Thus did Divine Goodness think of us, and prepare his Records for us, before we were in the World: These he hath written plain for our instruction, and wrapt up in them, what is necessary for our Salvation: 'Tis clear to inform our Understanding, and rich to comfort us in our Misery: 'Tis a Light to guide us, and a Cordial to refresh us; 'Tis a Lamp to our Feet, and a Medicine for our Diseases; a Purifier of our Filth, and a Restorer of us in our faintings. He hath by his Goodness seal'd the truth of it, by his efficacy on multitudes of Men: He hath made it the *Word of Regeneration* \*. Men wilder, and more monstrous than Beasts, have been tam'd and chang'd by the power of it: It hath rais'd multitudes of dead Men from a Grave fuller of horror than any Earthly one. Again, Goodness was in all ages sending his Letters of Advice and Counsel from Heaven, till the Canon of the *Scripture* was clos'd; Sometimes he wrote to chide a froward People, sometimes to cheer up an oppress'd and disconsolate People, according to the State wherein they were; as we may observe by the several Seasons wherein parts of *Scripture* were written. It was his Goodness that he first reveal'd any thing of his Will after the Fall; it was a further degree of Goodness, that he would add more Cubits to its Stature; before he would lay aside his Pensil it grew up to that bulk, wherein we have it. And his Goodness is further seen in the preserving it; He hath triumphed over the powers that oppos'd it, and shew'd himself

\* 1 Cor. 10.  
11.

\* Jam. 1. 18.



himself good in the Instruments that propagated it : He hath maintain'd it against the blasts of Hell, and spread it in *all Languages* against the obstructions of Men and Devils. The Sun of his Word is by his kindness preserv'd in our Horizon, as well as the Sun in the Heavens. How admirable is Divine Goodness ! He hath sent his Son to die for us, and his written Word to instruct us, and his Spirit to edge it for an entrance into our Souls : He hath open'd the Womb of the Earth to nourish us ; and sent down the Records of Heaven, to direct us in our Pilgrimage : He hath provided the Earth for our habitation, while we are Travellers ; and sent his Word to acquaint us with a felicity at the end of our Journey, and the way to attain in another World, what we want in this, *viz. a happy Immortality.*

5. His Goodness in his Government is evident. *In Conversions of Men.* Though this Work be wrought by his Power, yet his Power was first solicited by his Goodness. It was his rich Goodness, that he would employ his power to pierce the scales of a heart as hard as those of the *Leviathan*. It was this that opened the Ears of Men to hear him, and draws them from the hurry of Worldly cares, and the Charms of Sensual Pleasures, and, which is the top of all, the impostures and Cheats of their own hearts. It is this that sends a spark of his wrath into Mens consciencies, to put them to a stand in sin, that he might not send down a shower of Brimstone eternally to consume their persons. This it was that first shewed you the Excellency of the Redeemer, and brought you to taste the sweetness of his Blood, and find your security in the Agonies of his Death. 'Tis his Goodness to call one man and not another, to turn *Paul* in his course, and lay hold of no other of his companions. 'Tis his Goodness to call any, when he is not bound to call one.

1. 'Tis his Goodness, *To pitch upon mean and despicable Men in the eye of the World.* To call this poor *Publican*, and over-look that proud *Pharisee*, this Man that sits upon a Dunghil, and neglect him that glitters in his Purple. His Majesty is not enticed by the lofty Titles of Men, nor, which is more worth, by the Learning and Knowledge of Men. *Not many Wise ; not many Mighty ;* \* not many Doctors, nor many Lords, though some of them ; but his Goodness condescends to the *base things* of the World, and things which are *despised*. *The Poor receive the Gospel\** ; when those that are more acute, and furnish'd with a more apprehensive Reason, are not touch'd by it.

\* Cor. i. 26,  
27, 28.

\* Mat. 11. 5.

2. *The worst Men.* He seizeth sometimes upon Men most soyl'd, and neglects others that seem more clean and less polluted. He turns Men in their course in sin, that by their infernal practices have seem'd to have gone to School to Hell, and to have suckt in the sole instructions of the Devil. He lays hold upon some when they are most under actual demerit, and snatcheth them as Fire-brands out of the Fire ; as upon *Paul* when fullest of rage against him ; And shoots a Beam of Grace, where nothing could be justly expected but a Thunder-bolt of Wrath. 'Tis his Goodness to visit any, when they lie putrifying in their loathsome Lusts ; To draw near to them who have been guilty of the greatest contempt of God, and the light of Nature ; The murdering *Manassehs*, persecuting *Sauls*, Christ-crucifying *Jews*, Persons in whom Lusts had had a peaceable possession and Empire for many years.

3. His Goodness appears, *In converting Men possess'd with the greatest enmity against him, while he was dealing with them.* All were in such a state, and framing contrivances against him, when Divine Goodness knockt at the door \*. He lookt after us, when our backs were turned upon him, and sought us, when we slighted him, and were a *gain-saying People\** ; when we had shaken off his convictions, and contended with our Maker, and mustered up

\* Col. 1. 21.

\* Rom. 10. 21.



up the Powers of Nature against the Alarms of Conscience; struggled like wild Bulls in a Net, and blunted those Darts which stuck in our Souls. Not a Man that is turn'd to him, but had lifted up the heel against his Gospel-Grace, as well as made light of his Creating Goodness. Yet it hath employ'd it self about such ungrateful Wretches, to polish those knotty and rugged pieces for Heaven; And so invincibly, that he would not have his Goodness defeated by the fierceness and rebellion of the Flesh. Though the thing was more difficult in it self (if any thing may be said to have a difficulty to Omnipotency) than to make a Stone live, or to turn a Straw into a Marble-Pillar. The Malice of the Flesh makes a Man more unfit for the one, than the nature of the Straw unfits it for the other.

4. His Goodness appears in turning Men, *When they were pleas'd with their own misery, and unable to deliver themselves.* When they prefer'd a Hell before him, and were in love with their own Vileness; when his Call was our torment, and his neglect of us had been accounted our felicity. Was it not a mighty Goodness to keep the Light close to our Eyes, when we endeavour'd to blow it out, and the corrosive near to our hearts when we endeavour'd to tear it off, being more fond of our Disease, than the Remedy? We should have been scalded to death with the *Sodomites*, had not God laid his good hand upon us, and drawn us from the approaching ruine we affected, and were loath to be freed from. And had we been displeas'd with our state, yet we had been as unable Spiritually to raise our selves from Sin to Grace, as to raise our selves naturally from Nothing to Being: In this state we were when his Goodness triumphed over us; when he put a hook into our nostrils, to turn us in order to our Salvation; and drew us out of the Pit, which we had digg'd, when he might left us to sink under the rigors of his Justice, we had merited. Now this Goodness in Conversion is greater than that in Creation; as in Creation there was nothing to oppose him, so there was nothing to disoblige him: Creation was terminated to the good of a mutable Nature, and Conversion tends to a supernatural Good. God pronounced all Creatures good at first, and Man among the rest, but did not pronounce any of them, or Man himself, his *Portion*, his *Inheritance*, his *Segullah*, his *House*, his *Diadem*. He speaks slightly of all those things which he made, the noblest Heavens, as well as the lowest Earth in comparison of a true Convert. \* *All those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, but to this Man will I look, to him that is of a contrite Spirit.* 'Tis more goodness to give the espousing Grace of the Covenant, than the compleating Glory of Heaven. As it is more for a Prince to marry a Beggar, than only to bring her to live deliciously in his Courts; all other benefits are of a meaner strain, if compar'd with this; there is little less of Goodness in imparting the Holiness of his Nature, than imputing the Righteousness of his Son.

\* Isa. 66. 1, 2.

6. The Divine Goodness doth appear in answering Prayers. He delights to be familiarly acquainted with his People, and to hear them call upon him. He indulgeth them a free access to him, and delights in every address of an upright Man\*. The wonderful efficacy of Prayer depends not upon the nature of our Petitions, or the temper of our Soul, but the Goodness of God to whom we address. *Christ* establisheth it upon this bottom; when he exhorts to ask in his name, he tell them the Spring of all their Grants, is the Fathers love. \* *I say not I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loves you.* And since it is of it self incredible, that a Majesty exalted above the Cherubims, should stoop so low, as to give a miserable and rebellious Creature admittance to him, and afford him a gracious hearing, and a quick supply, *Christ* ushers in the Promise of answering Prayer, with a Note of great Assurance. \* *I say unto you, ask and it shall be given you.* I that know the Mind of my Father, and his good disposition, assure you, your Prayer shall not be in vain. Perhaps you will

\* Prov. 15. 8.

\* Joh. 16. 26, 27.

\* Luk. 11. 9, 10.



- will not be so ready of your selves, to imagine so great a Liberality; but take it upon my word, 'tis true, and so you will find it. And his Bounty travels as it were in Birth, to give the greatest Blessings, upon our asking, rather than the smallest. \* *Your Heavenly Father shall give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him*: Which in *Matt. 7. 11.* is called *good things*. Of all the good and rich things Divine Goodness hath in its Treasury, he delights to give the best upon asking, because God doth act so, as to manifest the greatness of his Bounty and Magnificence to Men; and therefore is delighted, when Men by their Petitioning him, own such a liberal disposition in him, and put him upon the manifesting it. He would rather you should ask the greatest things Heaven can afford, than the trifles of this World; Because his Bounty is not discovered in meaner Gifts, he loves to have an opportunity to manifest his affection above the liberality and tenderness of Worldly Fathers. He doth more wait to give in a way of Grace, than we to beg.
- \* *1 Cor. 13. 18.* \* *And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you.* He stands expecting your Suits, and employs his Wisdom in pitching upon the fittest seasons, when the manifestation of his Goodness may be most gracious in it self, and the Mercy you want most welcome to you; as it follows; for *the Lord is a God of Judgment*. He chooseth the time, wherein his doles may be most acceptable to his Suppliants; \* *In an acceptable time have I heard thee*. He often opens his hand, while we are opening our Lips, and his Blessings meet our Petitions, at the first setting out upon their Journey to Heaven.
- \* *1 Sam. 65. 24.* \* *While they are yet speaking, I will hear.* How often do we hear a secret Voice within us, while we are Praying, saying, *Your Prayer is granted*: As well as hear a Voice behind us, while we are Erring, saying, *This is the way, walk in it*? And his liberality exceeds often our desires, as well as our deserts; and gives out more than we had the wisdom or confidence to ask.
- \* *Eph. 3. 20.* The Apostle intimates it in that Doxology, \* *Unto him who is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think*. This Power would not have been so strong an Argument of comfort, if it were never put in practice, He is more liberal than his Creatures are craving. Abraham petition'd for the life of *Ishmael*, and God promiseth him the birth of *Isaac* \*. *Isaac* asks for a Child, and God gives him two, *Gen. 25. 21, 22.* *Jacob* desires Food to eat, and Raiment to put on; God confines not his Bounty within the narrow limits of his Petition, but instead of a Staff wherewith he passed *Jordan*, makes him repass it with two Bands \*. *David* askt life of God, and he gave him Life and a Crown to boot †. The *Israelites* would have been contented with a free life in *Egypt*, they only cried to have their Chains struck off; God gave them that, and adopts them to be his peculiar People, and raises them into a famous State. 'Tis a wonder that God should condescend so much, that he should hear Prayers so weak, so cold, so wandring, and gather up our sincere Petitions from the dung of our distractions and diffidence. *David* vents his astonishment at it; \* *Blessed be God, for he hath shewed me marvellous kindness. I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thy Eyes, nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplication*. How do we wonder at the goodness of a petty Man in granting our desires; how much more should we at the Humility and Goodness of the most Sovereign Majesty of Heaven and Earth?

6. The Goodness of God is seen in bearing with the infirmities of his People, and accepting imperfect Obedience. Though *Asa* had many blots in his Scutcheon, yet they are over-lookt, and this Note set upon Record by Divine Goodness, That his heart was perfect towards the Lord all his days; \* *But the high places were not removed, nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days*. He takes notice of a sincere, though chequer'd Obedience, to reward it, which could claim nothing but a slight from him, if he were extream to mark what is done amiss. When there is not an opportunity to work, but only to will, he accepts the will, as if it had past into work and act.
- \* *1 Kings 15. 14.*



act. He sees *no iniquity in Jacob*, \* *i. e.* He sees it not so as to cast off a respect to their Persons, and the acceptance of their Services: His Omniscience knows their Sins, but his Goodness doth not reject their Persons. He is of so good a disposition, that he delights in a weak Obedience of his Servants, not in the Imperfection but in the Obedience; \* *He delights in the way of a good Man*, though he sometimes slips in it: He accepts a poor Mans Pigeon, as well as a rich Mans Ox; He hath a Bottle for the Tears, and a Book for the services of the Upright, as well as for the most perfect Obedience of Angels: \* He preserves their Tears, as if they were a rich and generous Wine, as the Vine-dresser doth the Expressions of the Grape.

8. The Goodness of God is seen in Afflictions and Persecutions. If it be good for us to be afflicted, for which we have the Psalmist's Vote, \* then Goodness in God is the principal cause and orderer of the Afflictions. 'Tis his Goodness to snatch away that, whence we fetch supports for our security, and encouragements for our insolence against him: He takes away the thing which we have some value for, but such as his Infinite Wisdom sees inconsistent with our true happiness. 'Tis no ill will in the Physician to take away the hurtful Matter the Patient loves, and prescribe bitter Potions, to advance that health which the other impair'd. Nor any mark of unkindness in a Friend, to wrest a Sword out of a mad Mans hand, wherewith he was about to stab himself, though it were beset with the most Orient Pearls. To prevent what is evil, is to do us the greatest good. 'Tis a kindness to prevent a Man from falling down a Precipice, though it be with a violent blow, that lays him flat upon the ground at some distance from the edge of it. By Afflictions he often snaps asunder those Chains which fetter'd us, and quells those Passions which ravag'd us: He sharpens our Faith, and quickens our Prayers, he brings us into the secret Chamber of our own heart, which we had little mind before to visit by a self-examination. 'Tis such a Goodness that he will vouchsafe to correct Man in order to his Eternal Happiness, that Job makes it one part of his astonishment; \* *What is Man, that thou shouldest magnify him? That thou shouldest set thy heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning? And trie him every moment?* His strokes are often the magnifyings and exaltings of Man. He sets his heart upon Man, while he inflicts the smart of his Rod: He shews thereby, what a high account he makes of him, and what a special affection he bears to him. When he might treat us with more severity after the breach of his Covenant, and make his jealousy flame out against us in furious Methods; he will not destroy his Relation to us, and leave us to our own inclinations, but deal with us as a Father with his Children; and when he takes this course with us, 'tis when it cannot be avoided without our ruine: His Goodness would not suffer him to do it, if our badness did not force him to it, \* *I will melt them and trie them, for how shall I do for the daughter of my People?* What other Course can I take but this, according to the nature of Man? The Goldsmith hath no other way to separate the Dross from the Metal, but by melting it down. And when the impurities of his People necessitate him to this proceeding, he sits as a Refiner: \* He watches for the purifying the Silver, not for his own profit as the Goldsmith, but out of a Care of them, and good will to them; As himself speaks, \* *I have Refin'd thee but not with Silver*; Or as some read it, *not for Silver*. As when he scatters his People abroad for their Sin, he will not leave them without his Presence for their Sanctuary: \* He would by his Presence with them supply the place of Ordinances, or be an Ark to them in the midst of the Deluge: His hand that struck them, is never without a Goodness to comfort them, and pity them. When Jacob was to go into Egypt, which was to prove a furnace of Affliction to his Offspring, God promises to go down with him, and to bring him up again. A Promise not only made to Jacob in his Person, but to Jacob in his Posterity. He return'd not out of Egypt in his



Person, but as the Father of a numerous Posterity. He that would go down with their Root, and afterwards bring up the Branches, was certainly with them in all their Oppressions; *I will go down with thee. Down*, saith one, \* What a word is that for a Deity? *into Egypt, Idolatrous Egypt*, What a place is that for his Holiness? Yet, Oh the Goodness of God! He never thinks himself low enough to do his People good, nor any place too bad for his Society with them. So when he had sent away into Captivity the People of *Israel* by the hand of the *Assyrian*, his bowels yearn after them in their affliction; \* *The Assyrian Opprest them without Cause, i. e. without a just Cause in the Conqueror to inflict so great an evil upon them, but not without Cause from God, whom they had provoked. Nor therefore what have I here, saith the Lord? What do I here? I will not stay behind them. What do I longer here? For I will redeem again those Jewels the Enemy hath carried away. That Chapter is a Prophecie of Redemption: God shews himself so good to his People in their Persecutions, that he gives them occasion to glorifie him in the very Fires, as the Divine Order is, Wherefore glorifie the Lord in the Fires.*

\* Harwood's  
Sermon at Ox-  
ford, p. 1.

\* Isa. 32. 4, 5.

\* Mal. 24. 15.

9. The Goodness of God is seen in *Temptations*. In those he takes occasion to shew his care and watchfulness, as a Father uses the distress of a Child as an opportunity for manifesting the tenderness of his affection. God is at the beginning and end of every Temptation; He measures out both the quality and quantity: He exposeth them not to Temptation beyond the ability he hath already granted them, or will at the time, or afterwards multiply in them. \* He hath promised his People, that *the gates of Hell shall not prevail against them: That in all things they shall be more than Conquerors through him that lov'd them: That the most raging Malice of Hell, shall not wrest them out of his hands.* His Goodness is not less in performing, than it was in promising: And as the care of his Providence extends to the least as well as the greatest; so the watchfulness of his Goodness extends to us in the least as well as in the greatest Temptation.

\* 1 Cor. 10.  
13.

1. The Goodness of God appears in *shortening Temptations*. None of them can go beyond their appointed times: \* The strong blast Satan breaths, cannot blow, nor the Waves he raises, rage one minute beyond the time God allows them; when they have done their work, and come to the period of their time, God speaks the word, and the Wind and Sea of Hell must obey him, and retire into their Dens. The more violent Temptations are, the shorter time doth God allot them. The assaults Christ had at the time of his Death, were of the most pressing and urging nature: The Powers of Darkness were all in Arms against him; the Reproaches and scorns put upon him, questioning his Sonship, were very sharp; yet a little before his Suffering he calls it but an hour, \* *This is your hour and the Power of Darkness.* A short time that Men and Devils were combin'd against him; and the time of Temptation that is to come upon all the World for their trial, is call'd but an hour\*. In all such attempts, the greatness of the rage is a certain Prognostick of the shortness of the Season, *Revel. 12. 12.*

\* Dan. 12. 35.

\* Luke 12. 53.

\* Rev. 3. 10.

2. The Goodness of God appears in *strengthening his People under Temptations*. If he doth not restrain the Arm of Satan from striking, he gives us a Sword to manage the Combat, and a Shield to bear off the blow. \* If he obscures his Goodness in one part, he clears and brightens it in another: He either binds the strong Man that he shall not stir, or gives us Armour to render us victorious. If we fall, it is not for want of provision from him, but for want of our putting on the Armour of God\*. When we have not a strength by Nature, he gives it us by Grace: He often quells those Passions within, which would joyn hands with, and second the Temptation without. He either

\* Eph. 6. 16.  
17.

\* Eph. 6. 11.  
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either qualifies the Temptation, suitably to the force we have, or else supplies us with a new strength to mate the Temptation, he intends to let loose against us: He knows we are but Dust, and his Goodness will not have us unequally matcht. The Jews that in *Antiochus* his time were under great Temptation to Apostacy, by reason of the violence of their Persecutions, were *out of weakness made strong* for the Combat\*. The Spirit came more strongly upon *Sampson*, when the *Philistines* most furiously and confidently assaulted him. His Spirit is sent to strengthen his People, before the Devil is permitted to tempt them; \* *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit. Then:* When? When the Spirit had in an extraordinary manner descended upon him, *Matth. 3. 16. Then*, and not before. As the Angels appeared to Christ after his Temptation, to Minister to him, so they appear'd to him before his Passion, the time of the strongest Powers of Darkness, to strengthen him for it: He is so Good, that when he knows our Potsherd strength too weak, he furnisheth our Recruits from his own Omnipotence; \* *Be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might.* He doth as it were breath in something of his own Almightyness, to assist us in our wrestling against Principalities and Powers, and make us capable to sustain the violent Storms of the Enemies.

\* Heb. 1: 34.

\* Matth. 4. 1.

\* Eph. 6. 10.

3. The Goodness of God is seen in Temptations, *in giving great Comforts in or after them.* The Israelites had a more immediate provision of *Manna* from Heaven, when they were in the Wilderness. We read not that the Father spake audibly to the Son, and gave him so loud a Testimony, that he was his beloved Son, *in whom he was well pleased*, till he was upon the brink of strong Temptations\*: Nor sent Angels to Minister immediately to his Person, till after his success\*. *Job* never had such evidences of Divine Love, till after he had felt the sharp strokes of *Satans* Malice; he had heard of God before by the *hearing of the Ear*, but afterwards is admitted into greater familiarity\*: He had more choice appearances, clearer illuminations, and more lively instructions. And though his People fall into Temptation, yet after their rising, they have more signal Marks of his favour, than others have, or themselves, before they fell. *Peter* had been the Butt of *Satans* rage, in tempting him to deny Christ, and he had shamefully comply'd with the Temptation; yet to him particularly must the first news of the Redeemers Resurrection be carried by Gods order in the mouth of an Angel; \* *Go your ways, tell his Disciples and Peter.* We have the greatest Communion with God after a Victory: The most refreshing truths after the Devil hath done his worst. God is ready to furnish us with strength in a Combat, and Corals after it.

\* Mat. 3. 17.

\* Mat. 4. 11.

\* Job 42. 5.

\* Mar. 16. 7.

4. The Goodness of God is seen in Temptations, *in discovering and advancing inward Grace by this means.* The issue of a Temptation of a Christian is often like that of Christs, the manifesting a greater vigor of the Divine Nature in affections to God, and enmity to Sin. Spices perfume not the Air with their scent, till they are invaded by the Fire; the truth of Grace is evidenced by them. The assault of an Enemy revives, and actuates that Strength and Courage, which is in a Man perhaps unknown to himself as well as others, till he meets with an Adversary. Many seem good, not that they are so in themselves, but for want of a Temptation. This many times verifies a Vertue, which was own'd upon trust before, and discovers that we had more Grace than we thought we had. The solicitations of *Josephs* Mistress clear'd up his Chastity. We are many times under Temptation, as a Candle under the Snuffer, it seems to be out, but presently burns the clearer. Afflictions are like those Clouds, which look black, and Eclipse the Sun from the Earth, but yet when they drop, refresh that Ground they seem to threaten, and multiply the Grain on the Earth, to serve for our Food;

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and so our troubles while they wet us to the Skin, wash much of that dust from our Graces, which in a clearer day had been blown upon us. Too much rest Corrupts; Exercise teacheth us to manage our Weapons: The Spiritual Armour would grow rusty, without opportunity to furbish it up. Faith receives a new heart by every Combat, and by every Victory; like a Fire it spreads it self further, and gathers strength by the blowing of the Wind. While the Gardener commands his Servant to shake the Tree, he intends to fasten its Roots, and settle it firmer in its place; And is this an ill will to the Plant?

5. His Goodness is seen in Temptations, *in preventing Sin which we were likely to fall into.* Pauls Thorn in the Flesh was to prevent the pride of his Spirit, and let out the windiness of his heart, \* lest it should be exalted above measure. The Goodness of God makes the Devil a Polisher, while he intends to be a Destroyer. The Devil never works, but fitably to some Corruption lurking in us: Divine Goodness makes his fiery Darts a means to discover, and so to prevent the treachery of that perfidious inmate in our own hearts. Humility is a greater benefit than a putrifying pride; If God brings us into a Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil, 'tis to bring down our loftiness, to starve our Carnal Confidence, and expell our rusting security\*; We many times fly under a Temptation to God, from whom we sat too loose before. Is it not Goodness to use those means that may drive us into his own Arms? 'Tis not a want of goodness to Soap the Garment, in order to take away the Spots: We have reason to bless God for the Assaults from Hell, as well as pure Mercies from Heaven; and it is a Sin to overlook the one, as well as the other, since Divine Goodness shines in both.

6. The Goodness of God is seen in Temptations, *in fitting us more for his Service.* Those whom God intends to make choice Instruments in his Service, are first season'd with strong Temptations, as Timber reserved for the strong Beams of a Building, is first expos'd to Sun and Wind, to make it more compact for its proper use. By this Men are brought to answer the end of their Creation, the Service of God, which is their proper Goodness. Peter was after his foil by a Temptation more Courageous in his Masters Cause than before, and the more fitted to strengthen his Brethren. Thus the Goodness of God appears in all parts of his Government.

I shall now come to the U S E.

First, Of Instruction.

1. If God be so Good, *how unworthy is the contempt or abuse of his Goodness?*

1. *The contempt and abuse of Divine Goodness is frequent and common; it began in the first Ages of the World, and commenced a few moments after the Creation; it hath not to this day diminish'd its affronts; Adam began the Dance, and his Posterity have follow'd him; The injury was directed against this, when he entertain'd the Seducers Notion of Gods being an envious Deity, in not indulging such a knowledge, as he might have afforded him: \* God doth know, that you shall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil.* The charge of Envy is utterly inconsistent with pure Goodness. What was the language of this Notion so easily entertain'd by Adam, but that the Tempter was better than God, and the Nature of God as base and sordid as the Nature of a Devil? Satan Paints God with his own Colours, Represents him as Envious and Malicious as himself: Adam admires, and believes the Picture to be true, and hangs it up as a beloved one in the Closet of his heart. The Devil



Devil still drives on the same Game, fills Mens hearts with the same Sentiments, and by the same means he Murder'd our first Parents, he redoubles the Stabs to his Posterity. Every violation of the Divine Law is a contempt of Gods Goodness, as well as his Sovereignty, because his Laws are the Products both of the one and the other. Goodness animates them while Sovereignty enjoys them : God hath Commanded nothing but what doth conduce to our happiness. All disobedience implies, that his Law is a snare to entrap us, and make us miserable, and not an act of Kindness, to render us happy, which is a disparagement to this Perfection, as if he had Commanded what would promote our Misery, and prohibited what would conduce to our Blessedness : To go far from him, and walk after vanity, is to charge him with our Iniquity, and Unrighteousness, Baseness, and Cruelty in his Commands ; God implies it by his Speech, \* *What iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and walked after vanity?* \* Jer. 2. 5. As if like a Tyrant he had consulted Cruelty in the composition of them, and design'd to Feast himself with the Blood and Misery of his Creatures. Every Sin is in its own Nature a denial of God to be the chiefest Good and Happiness, and implies that it is no great matter to lose him ; 'tis a forsaking him as the Fountain of Life, and a preferring a crackt and empty Cistern as the chief Happiness before him \* . \* Jer. 2. 13. Though Sin is not so Evil as God is Good, yet it is the greatest Evil, and stands in opposition to God as the greatest Good. Sin disorders the Frame of the World, it endeavour'd to frustrate all the Communications of Divine Goodness in Creation, and to stop up the way of any further Streams of it to his Creatures.

2. *The abuse and contempt of the Divine Goodness is base and disingenuous.* 'Tis the highest Wickedness, because God is the highest Goodness, pure Goodness that cannot have any thing in him worthy of our contempt. Let Men injure God under what Notion they will, they injure his Goodness ; because all his Attributes are summ'd up in this one, and all as it were Deified by it. For whatsoever Power or Wisdom he might have, if he were destitute of this, he were not God : The contempt of his Goodness implies him to be the greatest Evil, and worst of Beings. Badness, not Goodness is the proper Object of Contempt : As Respect is a propension of Mind to something that is Good, so Contempt is an alienation of the Mind from something as Evil, either simply or supposedly Evil in its Nature, or base or unworthy in its action towards that Person that contemns it. As Men desire nothing but what they apprehend to be Good, so they slight nothing but what they apprehend to be Evil : Since nothing therefore is more Contemned by us than God, nothing more spurn'd at by us than God, it will follow that we regard him as the most loathsome and despicable Being, which is the greatest Baseness. And our Contempt of him is worse than that of the Devils ; they injure him under the inevitable strokes of his Justice, and we slight him when we are surrounded with the Expressions of his Bounty ; They abuse him under Vials of Wrath, and we under a plenteous Liberality ; They malice him, because he inflicts on them what is hurtful, and we despise him, because he Commands what is profitable, holy, and honourable in its own Nature, though not in our Esteem. They are not under those high Obligations as we, they abuse his Creating, and we his Redeeming Goodness : He never sent his Son to shed a drop of Blood for their Recovery, they can expect nothing but the torment of their Persons, and the destruction of their Works : But we abuse that Goodness, that would Rescue us since we are Miserable, as well as that Righteousness which Created us Innocent. How base is it to use him so ill, that is not once or twice, but a daily, hourly Benefactor to us ; whose Rain drops upon the Earth for our Food, and whose Sun shines upon the Earth for our pleasure as well as profit ; such a Benefactor as is the true Proprietor of what we have, and thinks nothing too good for them, that think every thing too much for his



his Service? How unworthy is it to be guilty of such base Carriage towards him, whose benefits we cannot want, nor live without? How disingenuous both to God and our selves, to *despise the riches of his Goodness, that are design'd to lead us to Repentance*, and by that to Happiness? And more hainous are the Sins of Renew'd Men upon this account, because they are against his *Goodness*, not only offer'd to them, but tasted by them; not only against the Notion of Goodness, but the Experience of Goodness, and the relisht sweetness of choicest Bounty.

\* Rom. 1. 4.

\* 1 Sam. 2.  
28.  
† 2 Sam. 12.  
7. 8. 9.

\* Hof. 2. 8, 9.  
† Josh. 14. 20.

3. *God takes this Contempt of his Goodness hainously.* He never upbraids Men with any thing in the Scripture, but with the abuse of the good things he hath vouchsaf'd them, and the unmindfulness of the Obligations arising from them. This he bears with the greatest regret and indignation. Thus he upbraids *Eli* with the preference of him to the Priesthood, above other Families \*: And *David* with his Exaltation to the Crown of *Israel*, † when they abused those Honours to carelessness and licentiousness. All Sins offend God, but Sins against his Goodness do more disparage him; and therefore his fury is the greater, by how much the more liberally his benefits have been dispens'd. It was for abuse of Divine Goodness, as soon as it was tasted, that some Angels were hurl'd from their Blessed Habitation and more happy Nature: It was for this *Adam* lost his present Enjoyments, and future Happiness; for the abuse of Gods Goodness in Creation. For the abuse of Gods Goodness the old World fell under the fury of the Flood; and for the Contempt of the Divine Goodness in Redemption, *Jerusalem* once the darling City of the infinite Monarch of the World, was made an *Aeldema*, a Field of Blood. For this Cause it is, that Candlesticks have been removed, great Lights put out, Nations overturn'd, and Ignorance hath triumph'd in places bright before with the Beams of Heaven. God would have little care of his own Goodness, if he always prostituted the Fruits of it to our Contempt: Why should we expect, he should always continue that to us, which he sees, we will never use to his Service? When the *Israelites* would Dedicate the Gifts of God to the service of *Baal*, then he would return, and take away his Corn, and his Wine, and make them know by the loss, that those things were his in Dominion, which they abus'd, as if they had been Sovereign Lords of them \*. Benefits are Entail'd up us no longer than we obey; † *If you forsake the Lord, he will do you hurt, after he hath done you good.* While we obey, his Bounty shall shower upon us, and when we revolt, his Justice shall consume us. Present Mercies abus'd, are no Bulwarks against impenitent Judgments. God hath Curses as well as Blessings, and they shall light more heavy, when his Blessings have been more weighty: Justice is never so severe, as when it comes to right Goodness, and revenge its quarrel for the injuries received.

A convenient Enquiry may be here, *How Gods Goodness is condemn'd or abus'd?*

\* Psal. 100.  
21.

1. *By a forgetfulness of his Benefits.* We enjoy the Mercies, and forget the Donor; we take what he gives, and pay not the Tribute he deserves; The *Israelites* forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt \*. We send Gods Mercies, where we would have God send our Sins, into the Land of forgetfulness, and write his Benefits, where himself will write the Names of the Wicked, in the Dust, which every Wind defaceth: The remembrance soon wears out of our Minds, and we are so far from remembering what we had before, that we scarce think of that Hand that gives, the very instant wherein his Benefits drop upon us. *Adam* basely forgot his Benefactor, presently after he had been made capable to remember him, and reflect upon him; the first remark we hear of him, is of his forgetfulness, not a syllable of



of his thankfulness. We forget those Souls he hath lodg'd in us, to acknowledge his favours to our Bodies; we forget that Image wherewith he beautified us; and that Christ he expos'd as a Criminal to Death for our Rescue, which is such an act of Goodness as cannot be express'd by the Eloquence of the Tongue, or conceiv'd by the acuteness of the Mind. Those things which are so common, that they cannot be invisible to our Eyes, are unregarded by our Minds; our Sense prompts our Understanding, and our Understanding is deaf to the plain dictates of our Sense. We forget his Goodness in the Sun, while it warms us, and his Showers while they enrich us; in the Corn while it nourisheth us, and the Wine while it refresheth us; \* *She did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl*: She that might have read my Hand in every bit of Bread, and every drop of Drink, did not consider this. 'Tis an injustice to forget the benefits we receive from Man; 'tis a Crime of a higher Nature to forget those dispens'd to us by the hand of God, who gives us those things that all the World cannot furnish us with, without him. The Inhabitants of *Troas* will condemn us, who worshipp'd Mice, in a grateful remembrance of the Victory they had made easie for them, by gnawing their Enemies Bow-strings. They were mindful of the Courtesie of Animals, though unintended by those Creatures; and we are regardless of the fore-meditated Bounty of God. 'Tis in Gods Judgment a brutishness beyond that of a stupid Ox, or a duller Ass; \* *The Ox knows his Owner, and the Ass his Masters Crib, but Israel doth not know, my People do not consider*. The Ox knows his Owner that Pastures him, and the Ass his Master that feeds him; but Man is not so good as to be like to them, but so bad as to be inferior to them: He forgets him that sustains him, and spurns at him, instead of valuing him for the benefits conferr'd by him. How horrible is it, that God should loose more by his Bounty, than he would do by his Parcimony? If we had Blessings more sparingly, we should remember him more gratefully. If he had sent us a bit of Bread in a distress by a Miracle, as he did to *Elijah* by the Ravens, it would have stuck longer in our memories, but the sense of daily favours soonest wears out of our minds, which are as great Miracles as any in their own Nature, and the products of the same Power; But the wonder they should beget in us, is obscur'd by their frequency.

2. The Goodness of God is contemn'd by an impatient murmuring. Our repinings proceed from an inconsideration of Gods free liberality, and an ungrateful temper of Spirit. Most Men are guilty of this. 'Tis implied in the commendation of *Job* under his Pressures; \* *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly*, as if it were a Character peculiar to him, whereby he verified the Elogy, God had given of him before, v. 8. That there was none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man. What is imply'd by the Expression? but that scarce a Man is to be found without unjust complaints of God, and charging him under their Crosses with Cruelty; when in the greatest, they have much more reason to bless him for his Bounty in the remainder. Good Men have not been innocent: *Baruch* complains of God, for adding grief to his sorrow, not furnishing him with those great things he expected, whereas he had matter of thankfulness in Gods gift of his life as a prey. \* But his Master chargeth God in a higher strain, † *Oh Lord thou hast deceiv'd me, and I was deceived, I am in derision daily*. When he met with reproach instead of success in the execution of his Function, he quarrels with God, as if he had a mind to cheat him into a mischief, when he had more reason to bless him for the honour of being employ'd in his Service. Because we have not what we expect, we slight his Goodness in what we enjoy. If he Cross us in one thing, he might have made us successless in more: If he take away some things, he might as well have taken away all. The unmerited remainder, though never so little, deserves our acknowledgments more than the deserved loss, can justify our repining. And for that which is snatcht from

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us, there is more cause to be thankful, that we have enjoyed it so long, than to murmur that we possess it no longer. *Adams Sin* implies a repining: He imagin'd God had been short in his Goodness, in not giving him a knowledge he foolishly conceived himself capable of, and would venture a forfeiture of what already had been bountifully bestow'd upon him. Man thought God had envied him, and ever since, Man studies to be even with God, and envies him the free disposal of his own Doles: All murmuring either in our own Cause or others, charges God with a want of Goodness, because there is a want of that, which he foolishly thinks would make himself or others happy. The language of this Sin is, that Man thinks himself better than God, and if it were in his Power, would express a more plentiful Goodness than his Maker.

\* Job 4. 17.

As Man is apt to think himself *more pure than God*, \* so of a kinder Nature also than an Infinite Goodness. The *Israelites* are a wonderful Example of this contempt of Divine Goodness; They had been Spectators of the greatest Miracles, and partakers of the choicest deliverance: He had solicited their Redemption from Captivity, and when words would not do, he came to blows for them; Musters up his Judgments against their Enemies, and at last, as the *Lord of Hosts*, and God of Battles, totally defeats their Pursuers, and drowns them and their proud hopes of Victory in the Red Sea. Little account was made of all this by the Redeem'd ones, *They lightly esteem'd the Rock of their Salvation*, and lanch into greater unworthiness instead of being thankful for the breaking their Yoak: They are angry with him, that he had done so much for them: They repented that ever they had complied with him, for their own deliverance, and had a regret, that they had been brought out of *Egypt*: They were angry that they were Freemen, and that their Chains had been knockt off: They were more desirous to return to the Oppression of their *Egyptian* Tyrants, than have God for their Governor, and Caterer, and be fed with his *Manna*. *It was well with us in Egypt, Why came we forth out of Egypt?* which is call'd a *despising the Lord*: \* They were so far from rejoicing in the expectation of the future benefits promis'd them, that they murmur'd, that they had not enjoyed less; They were so sottish, as to be desirous to put themselves into the Irons whence God had deliver'd them; They would seek a Remedy in that *Egypt*, which had been the Prison of their Nation, and under the Successors of that *Pharaoh*, who had been the Invader of their Liberties; They would snatch *Moses* from the place, where the Lord by an extraordinary Providence hath establisht him; \* They would

\* Numb. 11.  
18, 20.

stone those that minded them of the Goodness of God to them, and thereupon of their Crime and their Duty; They rose against their Benefactors, and murmur'd against God, that had strengthen'd the hands of their Deliverers; they despised the *Manna* he had sent them, and despised the pleasant Land he intended them: \* All which was a high contempt of God and his unparalleled Goodness and Care of them. All murmuring is an accusation of Divine Goodness.

\* Numb. 16.  
3, 9, 10, 11.

\* Psal. 106.  
24.

3. By *unbelief and impenitency*. What is the reason we come not to him, when he calls us, but some secret imagination that he is of an ill Nature, means not as he speaks, but intends to mock us, instead of welcoming us? When we neglect his Call, spurn at his bowels, slight the riches of his Grace; As it is a disparagement to his Wisdom, to despise his Counsel, so it is to his Goodness, to slight his Offers, as though you could make better provision for your selves, than he is able or willing to do. It disgraceth that which is design'd to the praise of the glory of his Grace: And renders God Cruel to his own Son, as being an unnecessary shedder of his Blood. As the Devil by his Temptation of *Adam*, envied God the glory of his Creating Goodness; so unbelief envies God the glory of his Redeeming Grace: 'Tis a bidding defiance to him, and challenging him to Muster up the Legions of his Judgments, rather than have sent his Son to suffer for us, or his Spirit to sollicit



solicit us. Since the sending his Son was the greatest act of Goodness, that God could express, the refusal of him must be the highest Reproach of that Liberality, God design'd to commend to the World in so rare a Gift: The ingratitude in this refusal must be as high in the Rank of Sins, as the Person flighted is in the Rank of Beings, or Rank of Gifts. *Christ is a Gift*, \* the Royallest Gift, an *unparallel'd Gift*, springing from unconceivable Treasures of Goodness: \* What is our turning our backs upon this Gift but a low opinion of it? As though the richest Jewel of Heaven were not so valuable as a Swinish pleasure on Earth; and deserv'd to be treated at no other rate, than if meer Offals had been presented to us. The plain language of it is, that there were no gracious intentions for our welfare in this present; and that he is not as good in the Mission of his Son, as he would induce us to imagine. Impenitence is also an abuse of this Goodness, either by presumption as if God would entertain Rebels, that bid defiance against him, with the same respect that he doth his prostrate and weeping Suppliants; That he will have the same regard to the Swine as to the Children, and lodge them in the same Habitation: Or it speaks a suspicion of God, as a deceitful Master, one of a pretended, not a real Goodness; That makes promises to mock Men, and invitations to delude them; That he is an implacable Tyrant, rather than a good Father; A rigid, not a kind Being, delightful only to mark our Faults, and overlook our Services.

\* Rom. 5. 16.

\* John 3. 16.

4. The Goodness of God is contemned by a distrust of his Providence. As all trust in him supposeth him Good, so all distrust of him supposeth him Evil, either without Goodness to exert his Power, or without Power to display his Goodness. Job seems to have a Spice of this in his complaint, \* *I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me, I stand up, and thou regardest me not.* 'Tis a fume of the Serpents Venom, first breath'd into Man, to suspect him of Cruelty, Severity, Regardlessness, even under the daily Evidences of his good Disposition: And it is ordinary not to believe him when he speaks, nor Credit him when he acts: To question the goodness of his Precepts, and misinterpret the kindness of his Providence; As if they were design'd for the supports of a Tyranny, and the deceit of the Miserable. Thus the *Israelites* thought their miraculous deliverance from *Egypt*, and the placing them in security in the Wilderness, was intended only to pound them up for a slaughter\*. Thus they defil'd the lustre of Divine Goodness, which they had so highly Experimented, and placed not that confidence in him, which was due to so frequent a Benefactor; and thereby Crucify'd the rich Kindness of God, as *Gesebrard* translates the word, *limited*\*. 'Tis also a jealousy of Divine Goodness, when we seek to deliver our selves from our straits by unlawful ways; as though God had not kindness enough to deliver us without committing Evil. What did God make a World and all Creatures in it, to think of them no more, not to concern himself in their Affairs? If he be Good, he is diffusive, and delights to Communicate himself, and what Subjects should there be for it, but those that seek him and implore his assistance? 'Tis an indignity to Divine Bounty, to have such mean thoughts of it, that it should be of a Nature contrary to that of his Works, which the better they are, the more diffusive they are. Doth a Man distrust that the Sun will not shine any more, or the Earth not bring forth its Fruit? Doth he distrust the goodness of an approved Medicine, for the expelling his Distemper? If we distrust those things, should we not render our selves ridiculous, and sottish? And if we distrust the Creator of those things, do we not make our selves contemners of his Goodness? If his Careing for us be a principal Argument, to move us to cast our Care upon him, as it is, 1 *Pet. 5. 7. Casting your Care upon him; for he Cares for you*; then if we cast not our Care upon him, 'tis a denial of his Gracious Care of us; as if he regarded not what becomes of us.

\* Job 30. 10.

\* Numb. 14. 3.

\* Psal. 78. 41.



\* 2 Kings 6.  
33

5. We do contemn or abuse his Goodness *by omissions of Duty*. These sometimes spring from injurious conceits of God, which end in desperate Resolutions. It was the Crime of a good Prophet in his passion, \* *This Evil is of the Lord, Why should I wait on the Lord any longer?* God designs nothing but mischief to us, and we will seek him no longer. And the complaint of those in *Malachy, Mal. 3. 14.* is of the same nature: *Ye have said, 'tis vain to serve God, and what profit is it, that we have kept his Ordinances?* We have all this while serv'd a hard Master, not a Benefactor, and have not been answered with advantages proportionable to our services: We have met with a hand too niggardly, to dispense that Reward, which is due to the largeness of our Offerings. When Men will not lift up their Eyes to Heaven, and sollicit nothing but the contrivance of their own brain, and the industry of their own heads, they disown Divine Goodness, and approve themselves as their own Gods, and the Spring of their own Prosperity. Those that run not to God in their necessity, to crave his support, deny either the Arm of his Power, or the disposition of his Will, to sustain and deliver them: They must have very mean sentiments, or none at all of this Perfection, or think him either too empty to fill them, or too churlish to relieve them: That he is of a narrow and contracted Temper, and that they may sooner expect to be made better and happier by any thing else than by him. And as we contemn his Goodness by a *total omission* of those Duties which respect our own advantage and supply, as Prayer; so we contemn him as the chiefest Good, by an *omission* of the *due manner* of any act of Worship, which is design'd purely for the acknowledgment of him. As every omission of the material part of a Duty is a denial of his Sovereignty as Commanding it; So every omission of the manner of it, not performing it with a due esteem and valuation of him, a surrender of all the Powers of our Souls to him, is a denial of him, as the most amiable Object. But certainly to omit those Addresses to God, which his Precept enjoins, and his Excellency deserves, speaks this language, that they can be well enough, and do well enough without God, and stand in no need of his Goodness to maintain them. The neglect or refusal in a Malefactor to supplicate for his Pardon, is a wrong to, and contempt of the Princes goodness: Either implying, that he hath not a goodness in his Nature worthy of an Address, or that he scorns to be oblig'd to him for any Exercise of it.

\* Amyral,  
*Moral. Tom.*  
4. p. 291.

6. The Goodness of God is contemned or abus'd, *in relying upon our Services, to procure Gods good Will to us.* \* As when we stand in need either of some particular Mercy, or special Assistance: When Pressures are heavy, and we have little hopes of ease in an ordinary way: When the Devotions in course have not prevail'd for what we want: We engage our selves by extraordinary Vows and Promises to God, hereby to open that Goodness, which seems to be lockt up from us. Sometimes indeed Vows may proceed from a sole desire, to engage our selves to God, from a sense of the levity and inconstancy of our Spirits: Binding our selves to God by something more sacred and inviolable than a common Resolution. But many times the Vowing the building of a Temple, Endowing an Hospital, giving so much in Alms, if God will free them from a Fit of Sickness, and spin out the thread of their Lives a little longer, (as hath been frequent among the *Romanists*) arises from an opinion of Laziness, and a Selfishness in the Divine Goodness; that it must be squeezed out by some solemn Promises of Returns to him, before it will exercise it self to take their parts. Popular Vows are often the effects of an ignorance of the free and bubbling Nature of this Perfection of the Generousness and Royalty of Divine Goodness: As if God were of a mean and Mechanick Temper, not to part with any thing, unless he were in some measure paid for it: And of so bad a Nature, as not to give passage to any kindness to his Creature without a Bribe. It implies also, that

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he is of an ignorant, as well as contracted Goodness; that he hath so little understanding, and so much weakness of Judgment, as to be taken with such trifles and Ceremonial Courtships and little Promises; And meditated only low designs, in imparting his Bounty: 'Tis just as if a Malefactor should speak to a Prince, *Sir, If you will but bestow a Pardon upon me, and prevent the Death I have merited for this Crime, I will give you this Rattle.* All Vows made with such a temper of Spirit to God, are as injurious and abusive to his Goodness, as any Man will judge such an offer to be to a Majestick and Gracious Prince; as if it were a Trading, not a free and Royal Goodness.

7. The Goodness of God is abus'd, when we give up our Souls and Affections to those Benefits we have from God. When we make those things Gods Rivals, which were sent to Woe us for him, and offer those Affections to the Presents themselves, which they were sent to sollicite for the Master. This is done, when either we place our trust in them, or glue our choicest Affections to them. This Charge God brings against *Jerusalem*, the trusting in her own Beauty, Glory, and Strength, though it was a *Comeliness* put upon her by God\*. When a little Sun-shine of Prosperity breaks out upon us, we are apt to grasp it with so much eagerness and closeness, as if we had no other Foundation to settle our selves upon, no other Being that might challenge from us our sole dependence. And the love of our selves, and of Creatures above God, is very natural to us: \* *Lovers of themselves and lovers of Pleasure more than of God.* Self-love is the Root, and the love of Pleasures the top Branch, that mounts its head highest against Heaven. \* 'Tis for the love of the World that the dangers of the Sea are past over, that Men descend into the Bowels of the Earth, pass Nights without sleep, undertake Suits without intermission, wade through many inconveniencies, venture their Souls, and contemn God; In those things Men glory, and foolishly grow proud by them, and think themselves safe and happy in them. Now to love our selves above God, is to own our selves better than God, and that we transcend him in an amiable Goodness; Or if we love our selves equal with God, it at least manifests, that we think God no better than our selves, and think our selves our own chief good, and deny any thing above us, to out-strip us in goodness, whereby to deserve to be the Center of our Affections and Actions: And to love any other Creature above him, is to conclude some defect in God, that he hath not so much goodness in his own Nature, as that Creature hath, to compleat our felicity; that God is a slighter thing than that Creature. 'Tis to account God, what all the things in the World are, an imaginary happiness, a goodness of Clay, and them what God is, a Supream Goodness. 'Tis to value the goodness of a Drop above that of the Spring, and the goodness of the Spark above that of the Sun. As if the Bounty of God were of a less alloy, than the advantages we immediately receive from the hands of a silly Worm. By how much the better we think a Creature to be, and place our Affections chiefly upon it; by so much the more deficient and indigent we conclude God: For God wants so much in our conception, as the other thing hath goodness above him in our thoughts. Thus is God lessen'd below the Creature, as if he had a mixture of evil in him, and were capable of an imperfect goodness. He that esteems the Sun that shines upon him, the Clothes that warm him, the Food that nourisheth him, or any other Benefit above the Donor, regards them as more Comely and useful than God himself; and behaves himself, as if he were more oblig'd to them, than to God, who bestowed those advantageous qualities upon them.

\* Ezek. 16.  
14, 15.

\* 2 Tim. 3.  
2, 4.

\* Cressol.  
*Antholog. Part*  
2. p. 29.

8. The Divine Goodness is contemn'd, in sinning more freely upon the account of that Goodness, and employing Gods Benefits in a drudgery for our Lusts. This is a treachery to his Goodness, to make his Benefits serve for an end quite



\* Hos. 2. 8.

contrary to that for which he sent them. As if God had been plentiful in his Blessings, to hire them to be more fierce in their Rebellions, and sed them to no other purpose, but that they might more strongly kick against him: This is the Fruit which Corrupt Nature produceth. Thus the *Egyptians* who had so fertile a Country, prove unthankful to the Creator, by adoring the meanest Creatures, and putting the Scepter of the Monarch of the World, into the hands of the Sortishest and Cruellest Beasts. And the *Romans* multiply their Idols, as God multiplied their Victories. This is also the complaint of God concerning *Israel*, \* *She did not know, that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplied her Silver and Gold, which they prepar'd for Baal.* They ungratefully employ'd the Blessings of God in the Worship of an Idol against the will of the Donor. So in *Hos. 10. 1.* *According to the multitude of his Fruit, he hath increas'd the Altars, according to the goodness of his Land they have made goodly Images.* They followed their own inventions with the strength of my outward Blessings. As their Wealth increas'd, they increas'd the Ornaments of their Images; so that what were before of Wood and Stone, they advanc'd to Gold and Silver. And the like complaint you may see, *Ezek. 16. 17.* Thus,

\* 1 Tim. 6. 17.

1. *The Benefits of God are abused to Pride*; when Men standing upon a higher ground of outward Prosperity, vaunt it loftily above their Neighbours; the common fault of those that enjoy a Worldly Sun-shine, which the *Apostle* observes in his Direction to *Timothy*; \* *Charge them that are rich in this World, that they be not high-minded.* 'Tis an ill use of Divine Blessings, to be fill'd by them with Pride and Wind. Also,

2. *When Men abuse Plenty to Ease*; because they have abundance, spend their time in idleness, and make no other use of Divine Benefits, than to trifle away their time, and be utterly useles to the World.

\* Jer. 8. 19.

3. *When they also abuse Peace and other Blessings to security.* As they which would not believe the threatnings of Judgment and the Storm coming from a far Country, because the Lord was in *Sion*, and her King in her; \* *Is not the Lord in Sion, is not her King in her?* thinking they might continue their progress in their Sin, because they had the Temple, the Seat of the Divine Glory, *Sion*, and the promise of an everlasting Kingdom to *David*; abusing the Promise of God to presumption and security, and turning the Grace of God into wantonness.

\* Young, of Affliction, p. 34.

4. Again, *When they abuse the Bounty of God to sensuality and luxury*, misemploying the Provisions God gives them, in resolving to live like Beasts, when by a good improvement of them, they might attain the Life of Angels. Thus is the light of the Sun abus'd to conduct them, and the Fruits of the Earth abus'd to enable them to their prodigious Debauchery: *As we do, faith one, \* with the Thames, which brings us in Provision, and we soil it with our Rubbish.* The more God sows his Gifts, the more we sow our Cockle and Darnel. Thus we make our outward Happiness the most unhappy part of our lives, and by the strength of Divine Blessings exceed all Laws of Reason and Religion too.

How unworthy a Carriage is this, to use the Expressions of Divine Goodness as occasions of a greater outrage and affront of him? When we stab his Honour by those Instruments he puts into our hands to glorifie him; as if a favorite should turn that Sword into the Bowels of his Prince, wherewith he Knighted him. And a Servant enricht by a Lord, should hire by that Wealth Murderers to take away his life. How brutish is it, the more God Courts us with his Blessings, the more to spurn at him with our Feet? Like  
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the Mule that lifts up its Heel against the Dam, as soon as ever it hath suckt her. We never beat God out of our hearts, but by his own Gifts: He receives no blows from Men, but by those Instruments he gave them to promote their Happiness. While Man is an Enjoyer, he makes God a Loser by his own Blessings; inflames his Rebellion by those Benefits, which should kindle his love; and runs from him by the strength of those favours, which should endear the Donor to him. *Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish People and unwise?* is the Expostulation, *Deut. 32. 6.* Divine Goodness appears in the complaint of the abuse of it, in giving them Titles below their Crime, and complaining more of their being unfaithful to their own Interest, than Enemies to his Glory. *Foolish and unwise* in neglecting their own Happiness, a Charge below the Crime, which deserved to be abominable, ungrateful People to a Prodigy. All this Carriage towards God, is as if a Man should knock the *Chirurgion* on the Head, as soon as he hath set and bound up his Dislocated Members. So God compares the ungrateful behaviour of the *Israelites* against him, \* *Though I have bound, and strengthn'd their Arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me.* A Metaphor taken from a *Chirurgion* that applies Corroborating Playsters to a broken Limb. \* *Hos. 7. 13.*

9. We condemn the Goodness of God, in ascribing our Benefits to other Causes than Divine Goodness. Thus *Israel* ascribed her Felicity, Plenty, and Success to her Idols, as Rewards which her lovers had given her \*. And this Charge *Daniel* brought home upon *Belsazzar*; † *Thou hast praised the Gods of Silver, and Gold, and Brass, and Iron, and the God in whose hand is thy breath, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorify'd.* The God who hath given success to the Arms of thy Ancestors, and convey'd by their hands so large a Dominion to thee, thou hast not honour'd in the same Rank with the fordidest of thy Idols. 'Tis the same case, when we own him not as the Author of any success in our Affairs, but by an over-weening conceit of our own Sagacity, applaud and admire our selves, and over-look the Hand, that conducted us, and brought our endeavours to a good issue. We Eclipse the Glory of Divine Goodness, by setting the Crown that is due to it upon the head of our own Industry. A Sacrilege worse than *Belsazzar's* drinking of Wine with his Lords and Concubines in the Sacred Vessels pilfer'd from the Temple; as in that place of *Daniel*. This was the proud vaunt of the *Assyrian* Conqueror, for which God threatens to punish the fruit of his stout heart; \* *By the strength of my hand, I have done it, and by my Wisdom: for I am prudent, and I have removed the bounds of the People, and have robbed their Treasures, and I have put down the Inhabitants like a valiant Man.* Not a word of Divine Goodness and Assistance in all this, but applauding his own Courage and Conduct. This is a robbing of God, to set up our selves, and making Divine Goodness a Footstool, to ascend into his Throne. And as it is unjust, so it is ridiculous, to ascribe to our selves or Instruments, the chief honour of any work: As ridiculous as if a Soldier after a Victory should Erect an Altar to the honour of his Sword, or an Artificer offer Sacrifices to the Tools, whereby he compleated some excellent and useful Invention. A practice that every Rational Man would disdain, where he should see it. 'Tis a discarding any thoughts of the Goodness of God, when we imagine, that we chiefly owe any thing in this World to our own Industry or Wit, to Friends or Means, as though Divine Goodness did not open its hand, to interest it self in our Affairs, support our Ability, direct our Counsels, and mingle it self with any thing we do. God is the principal Author of any advantage that accrues to us, of any wise Resolution we fix upon, or any proper way we take to compass it; No Man can be wise in opposition to God, act wisely or well without him; His Goodness inspires Men with generous and magnificent Counsels, and furnisheth them with fit and proportionable Means; When he withdraws his hand, Mens heads grow foolish, and their hands

\* *Hos. 2. 5.*  
† *Dan. 5. 23.*

\* *Psal. 10. 12.*  
13. 14.



hands feeble; folly and weakness drops upon them as darkness upon the World upon the removal of the Sun. 'Tis an abuse of Divine Goodness, not to own it, but erect an Idol in its place. *Ezra* was of another mind, when he ascribed to the good hand of God, the *providing Ministers for the Temple*, and not to his own care and diligence\*: And *Nehemiah* the *success he had with the King* in the behalf of his Nation, and not solely to his favour with the Prince, \* or the arts he used to please him.

\* *Ezra* 8. 18.

\* *Neh.* 2. 8.

2. The second Information is this, If God be so good, 'tis a certain *Argument that Man is fallen from his Original State*. 'Tis the complaint of Man sometimes, that other Creatures have more of Earthly Happiness than Men have, live freer from cares and trouble, and are not rackt with that sollicitousness and anxiety as Man is: Have not such distempers to embitter their lives. 'Tis a good ground for Man to look into himself, and consider whether he hath not some ways or other, disobliged God more than other Creatures can possibly do. We often find that the Creatures Men have need of in this State, do not answer the expectation of Man. *Cursed be the ground for thy sake* \*. A fruitful Land is made barren, Thorns and Thistles triumph upon the face of the Earth instead of good Fruit. Is it like that that Goodness which is as infinite as his Power, and knows no more limits than his Almightyness, should imprint so many scars upon the World, if he had not been hainously provoked by some miscarriage of his Creature? Infinite Goodness could never move Infinite Justice to inflict Punishment upon Creatures, if they had not highly Merited it: We cannot think, that any Creature was blemisht with a Principle of Disturbance, as it came first out of the hand of God. All things were certainly settled in a due order and dependance upon one another: Nothing could be ungrateful, and unuseful to Man by the Original Law of their Creation: If there had, it had not been *Goodness*, but Evil and Baseness, that had Created the World. When we see therefore the Course of Nature overturn'd, the Order Divine Goodness had placed, disturb'd; and the Creatures pronounced good and useful to Man, employ'd as Instruments of Vengeance against him; We must conclude some horrible blot upon Humane Nature, and very odious to a God of Infinite Goodness; And that this blot was cast upon Man by himself, and his own fault; for it is repugnant to the Infinite Goodness of God, to put into the Creature, a Sinning Nature, to hurry him into Sin, and then punish him for that, which he had imprest upon him. The Goodness of God inclines him to love goodness, wherever he finds it, and not to punish any, that have not deserved it by their own Crimes. The Curse we therefore see the Creatures groan under, the disorders in Nature, the frustrating the expectations of Man in the Fruits of the Earth and plentiful Harvests, the trouble he is continually expos'd to in the World, which tedders down his Spirit from more generous Employments, shews, that Man is not what he was, when Divine Goodness first Erected him; but hath admitted into his Nature something more uncomely in the Eye of God; and so hainous that it puts his Goodness sometimes to a stand, and makes him lay aside the Blessings, his hand was fill'd with, to take up the Arms of Vengeance, wherewith to fight against the World. Divine Goodness would have secur'd his Creatures from any such invasions, and never us'd those things against Man, which he design'd in the first frame for Mans service, were there not some detestable disorder risen in the Nature of Man, which makes God with-hold his Liberality, and change the dispensation of his numerous Benefits into Legions of Judgments. The Consideration of the Divine Goodness, which is a Notion that Man naturally concludes to be inseparable from the Deity, would to an unbiass'd Reason, verifie the History of those Punishments, settled upon Man in the third Chapter of *Genesis*, and make the whole seem more probable to Reason at the first Relation. This instruction naturally flows from the

*Doctrine*

\* *Gen.* 3. 17.



*Doctrine of Divine Goodness.* If God be so good, it is a certain Argument, that Man is fallen from his Original State.

3. The third Information is this, If God be infinitely good, *there can be no just complaint against God, if Men be punished for abusing his Goodness.* Man had nothing, nay, it was impossible he could have any thing from infinite Goodness to disoblige him, but to engage him. God never did, nay, never could draw his Sword against Man, till Man had had slighted him, and affronted him by the strength of his own Bounty. 'Tis by this, God doth justify his severest proceedings against Men, and very seldom charges them with any else as the matter of their provocations; \* *Therefore will I return, and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the season thereof, and will recover my Wool and my Flax.* And in Ezek. 16. after he had drawn out a Bill of Complaint against them, and inserted on y the abuse of his Benefits, as a justification of what he intended to do; He concludes *Verse 27. Behold therefore, I have stretched out my hand over thee, and diminished thy ordinary food, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee.* When Men suffer, they suffer justly; they were not constrained by any Violence, or forced by any necessity, nor provok'd by any ill usage, to turn head against God, but broke the bands of the strongest Obligations, and most tender Allurements. What Man, what Devil can justly blame God for punishing them, after they had been so intolerably bold, as to fly in the face of that Goodness that had oblig'd them, by giving them beings of a higher elevation than to inferior Creatures, and furnishing them with sufficient strength to continue in their first Habitation? Man seems to have less reason to accuse God of rigor than Devils, since after his unreasonable Revolt, a more express Goodness than that which Created him, hath solicited him to Repentance, Courted him by melting Promises and Expostulations, added undeniable Arguments of Bounty, and drawn out the choicest Treasures of Heaven in the gift of his Son, to prevail over Mens perversity. And yet *Man* after he might arrive to the height and happiness of an *Angel*, will be fond of continuing in the meanness and misery of a Devil; and more strongly link himself to the Society of the damn'd Spirits, wherein by his first Rebellion he had incorporated himself. Who can blame God for vindicating his own Goodness from such desperate contempts, and the extream ingratitude of Man? \* If God be good, 'tis our happiness to adhere to him: If we depart from him, we depart from Goodness, and if Evil happen to us, we cannot blame God but our selves, for our departure. Why are Men happy? Because they cleave to God; Why are Men miserable? Because they recede from God; 'Tis then our own fault that we are miserable; God cannot be charg'd with any injustice, if we be miserable, since his Goodness gave means to prevent it, and afterwards added means to recover us from it, but all despis'd by us. The Doctrine of Divine Goodness justifies every Stone laid in the Foundation of Hell, and every Spark in that burning Furnace, since it is for the abuse of Infinite Goodness, that it was kindled.

\* Hosea 2. 9.

\* Pctav.  
Theolog. Dog.  
mat. Vol. 1.  
p. 407.

4. The fourth Information, *Here is a certain Argument, both for Gods fitness to govern the World, and his actual Government of it.*

1. *This renders him fit for the Government of the World, and gives him a full Title to it.* This Perfection doth the *Psalmist* Celebrate throughout the 107 *Psalm*, where he declares Gods Works of Providence, *vers. 8, 15, 21, 32.* Power without goodness would deface, instead of preserving; Ruine is the fruit of rigor without kindness; But God because of his infinite and immutable goodness cannot do any thing unworthy of himself, and uncomely in it self, or destructive to any Moral goodness in the Creature. 'Tis impossible he should do any thing that is base, or act any thing but for the best, because  
he



he is essentially and naturally, and therefore necessarily good. As a good Tree cannot bring forth bad Fruit, so a good God cannot produce evil acts; no more than a pure Beam of the Sun can engender so much as a mite of darkness; or infinite Heat produce any particle of Cold. As God is so much Light, that he can be no Darkness, so he is so much Good, that he can have no Evil; and because there is no Evil in him, nothing simply Evil can be produced by him. Since he is good by Nature, all evil is against his Nature, and God can do nothing against his Nature: It would be a part of impotence in him, to Will that which is Evil; and therefore the Misery Man feels, as well as the Sin whereby he deserves that Misery, are said to be from himself; \* *Oh Israel thou hast destroy'd thy self.* And though God sends Judgments upon the World, we have shewn these to be intended for the support and vindication of his Goodness. And *Hezekiah* judg'd no otherewise, when after the threatning of the Devastation of his House, the Plundering his Treasures, and Captivity of his Posterity, He replies, *Good is the Word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken* \*. God cannot act any thing that is base and Cruel, because his Goodness is as infinite as his Power, and his Power acts nothing, but what his Wisdom directs, and his Goodness moves him to. Wisdom is the Head in Government, Omniscience the Eye, Power the Arm, and Goodness the Heart and Spirit in them, that animates all.

\* Hof. 13. 9.

\* Isai. 39. 8.

2. As Goodness renders him fit to govern the World, so God doth actually govern the World. Can we understand this Perfection aright, and yet imagine, that he is of so Morose a Disposition, as to neglect the care of his Creatures? That his Excellency which was display'd in framing the World, should withdraw and wrap up it self in his own Bosom, without looking out, and darting it self out in the disposal of them? Can that which moved him first to Erect a World, suffer him to be unmindful of his own Work? Would he design first to display it in Creation, and afterwards obscure the Honour of it? That cannot be Entitled an Infinite permanent Goodness, which should be so indifferent, as to let the Creatures tumble together, as they please, without any order, after he had Moulded them in his hand. If Goodness be diffusive and communicative of it self, can it consist with the Nature of it, to extend it self to the giving the Creatures Being, and then withdraw and contract it self, not caring what becomes of them? 'Tis the Nature of Goodness after it hath communicated it self, to enlarge its Channels; That Fountain that springs up in a little hollow part of the Earth, doth in a short progress increase its Streams, and widen the Passages through which it runs: It would be a blemish to Divine Goodness, if it did desert what it made, and leave things to wild Confusions, which would be, if a good hand did not manage them, and a good Mind preside over them. This is the Lesson intended to us by all his Judgments, \* *That the living may know, that the Most High Rules in the Kingdoms of Men.* If he doth not actually govern the World, he must have devolv'd it somewhere, either to Men or Angels; Not to Men, who naturally want a goodness and Wisdom to govern themselves, much more to govern others exactly. And besides the misinterpretations of actions, they are liable to the want of Patience, to bear with the provocations of the World. Since some of the best at one time in the World, and in the greatest example of meekness and sweetness, would have kindled a Fire in Heaven to have consumed the *Samaritans*, for no other affront than a *non Entertainment of their Master, and themselves* \*. Nor hath he committed the disposal of things to Angels, either good or bad; though he useth them as Instruments in his Government, yet they are not the principal Pilots to Steer the World. Bad Angels certainly are not; they would make continual Ravages, meditate Ruine, never defeat their own Counsels, which they manage by the Wicked as their Instruments in the World, nor fill their Spirits with disquiet and restlessness when they are engaged in some Ruinous Design,

\* Dan. 4. 17.

\* Luke 9. 54.



Design, as often is experienc'd : Nor hath he committed it to the *good* Angels, who for ought we know, are not more numerous than the evil ones are : But besides, we can scarcely think their Finite Nature capable of so much goodness, as to bear the innumerable Debaucheries, Villanies, Blasphemies vented in one year, one week, one day, one hour throughout the World ; Their Zeal for their Creator might well be suppos'd to move them to testify their affection to him in a constant and speedy Righting of his injured Honour upon the heads of the Offenders. The evil Angels have too much Cruelty, and would have no care of Justice, but take pleasure in the Blood of the most Innocent, as well as the most Criminal. And the good Angels have too little tenderness, to suffer so many Crimes ; Since the World therefore continues without those floods of Judgments, which it daily merits, since notwithstanding all the provocations, the order of it is preserved ; 'Tis a testimony, that an Infinite Goodness holds the Helm in his hands, and spreads its warm Wings over it.

5. The fifth Information is this ; Hence we may infer the *ground of all Religion, 'tis this Perfection of Goodness*. As the Goodness of God is the lustre of all his Attributes, so it is the Foundation and Link of all true Religious Worship : The natural Religion of the Heathens was introduc'd by the consideration of Divine Goodness, in the Being he had bestow'd upon them, and the Provisions that were made for them. Divine Bounty was the Motive to Erect Altars, and present Sacrifices ; though they mistook the Object of their Worship, and offer'd the dues of the Creator, to the Instruments whereby he conveyed his Benefits to them. And you find, that the Religion instituted by him among the *Jews*, was enforc'd upon them by the consideration of their miraculous deliverance from *Egypt*, the preservation of them in the Wilderness, and the infeeding them in a Land flowing with Milk and Honey. Every act of bounty and success the *Heathens* received, moved them to appoint new Feasts, and repeat their adorations of those Deities, they thought the Authors and Promoters of their Victories and Welfare. The Devil did not mistake the common Sentiment of the World in Divine Service, when he alledg'd to God, that *Job did not fear him for nought, i. e. worship him for nothing*\*. All acts of Devotion take their rise from Gods liberality, either from what they have, or from what they hope : *Praise* speaks the Possession, and *Prayer* the Expectation of some Benefit from his Hand. Though some of the *Heathens* made *fear*, to be the prime Cause of the acknowledgment and worship of a Deity, yet surely something else besides and beyond this Establish'd so great a thing as *Religion* in the World ; an ingenuous Religion could never have been born into the World, without a Notion of *Goodness* ; and would have gaspt its last, as soon as this Notion should have expir'd in the minds of Men. What encouragement can fear of Power give, without sense of Goodness ? just as much as Thunder hath, to invite a Man to the place where it is like to fall, and crush him. The nature of *fear* is to drive from, and the nature of *goodness* to allure to the Object. The Divine Thunders, Prodiges, and other Armies of his Justice in the World, which are the Marks of his Power, could conclude in nothing but a slavish Worship : Fear alone, would have made Men blaspheme the Deity ; instead of serving him, they would have fretted against him ; they might have offer'd him a trembling Worship, but they could never have in their minds, thought him worthy of an Adoration ; they would rather have secretly complain'd of him, and cursed him in their heart, than inwardly have admir'd him : The issue would have been the same, which *Job's* Wife advis'd him to, when God withdrew his Protection from his Goods and Body, *Curse God and die*\*. 'Tis certainly the common sentiment of Men, that he

\* Job 1. 9.

\* Job 1. 9.



he had received from God, which did more deserve a worship from him, than the present evil had reason to discourage it. Alas! what is only fear'd, is hated, not ador'd: Would any seek to an irreconcilable Enemy? Would any person affectionately list himself in the service of a Man void of all good disposition? Would any distressed person put up a Petition to that Prince, who never gave any experiment of the sweetness of his Nature, but always satiated himself with the Blood of the meanest Criminals? All affection to service is rooted up, when hopes of receiving good are extinguish'd. There could not be a spark of that in the World, which is properly call'd Religion without a Notion of Goodness: The Existence of God is the first Pillar, and the Goodness of God in rewarding the next, upon which coming to him (which includes all acts of Devotion) is established, \* *He that comes unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*: If either of those Pillars be not thought to stand firm, all Religion falls to the ground. 'Tis this as the most agreeable Motive, that the Apostle *James* uses, to encourage Mens approach to God, because *he gives liberally, and upbraideth not* \*. A Man of a kind heart and bountiful hand, shall have his gate throng'd with suppliants, who sometimes would be willing to lay down their lives: *For a good Man one would even dare to die*; when one of a niggardly or tyrannical temper, shall be destitute of all free and affectionate applications. What Eyes would be lifted up to Heaven? What hands stretched out, if there were not a knowledge of goodness there to enliven their hopes of speeding in their Petitions? Therefore Christ orders our Prayers to be directed to God as a *Father*, which is a Title of tenderness, as well as a *Father in Heaven*, a Mark of his greatness; The one to support our confidence, as well as the other to preserve our distance. God could not be ingenuously ador'd and acknowledged, if he were not liberal as well as powerful: The Goodness of God is the foundation of all ingenuous Religion, Devotion, and Worship.

6. The sixth Instruction: *The Goodness of God renders God amiable*. His Goodness renders him beautiful, and his Beauty renders him lovely, both are linkt together: \* *How great is his Goodness? And how great is his Beauty?* This is the most powerful Attractive, and masters the affections of the Soul: 'Tis goodness only supposed, or real, that is thought worthy to demerit our affections to any thing. If there be not a reality of this, or at least an opinion and estimation of it in an Object, it would want a force and vigor to allure our Will. This Perfection of God is the Loadstone to draw us, and the Center for our Spirits to rest in.

1. *This renders God amiable to himself*. His Goodness is his Godhead, \* *By his Godhead is meant his Goodness*: If he loves his Godhead for it self, he loves his Goodness for it self: He would not be good, if he did not love himself: And if there were any thing more Excellent, and had a greater goodness than himself, he would not be good, if he did not love that greater Goodness above himself: For not only a hatred of goodness is evil, but an indifferent or cold affection to goodness, hath a tincture of evil in it. If God were not good, and yet should love himself in the highest manner, he would be the greatest Evil, and do the greatest evil in that act; for he would set his love upon that which is not the proper Object of such an affection, but the Object of aversion. His own Infinite Excellency and Goodness of his Nature, renders him lovely and delightful to himself; without this he could not love himself in a commendable and worthy way, and becoming the purity of a Deity; and he cannot but love himself for this: For as Creatures by not loving him as the Supream Good, deny him to be the choicest good, so God would deny himself and his own goodness, if he did not love himself, and that for his goodness. But the Apostle tells us, *That God cannot deny himself* \*: Self-love upon this account is the only Prerogative of God, because there is not



not any thing better than himself, that can lay any just claim to his affections: He only ought to love himself, and it would be an injustice in him to himself, if he did not. He only can love himself, for this: An Infinite Goodness ought to be infinitely loved, but he only being Infinite, can only love himself according to the due Merit of his own Goodness. He cannot be so amiable to any Man, to any Angel, to the highest *Seraphim*, as he is to himself; because he is only capable in regard of his Infinite Wisdom, to know the infiniteness of his own Goodness. And no Creature can love him, as he ought to be loved, unless it had the same infinite capacity of Understanding to know him, and of Affection to embrace him. This first renders God amiable to himself.

2. *It ought therefore to render him amiable to us.* What renders him lovely to his own Eye, ought to render him so to ours; and since by the shortness of our Understandings we cannot love him, as he Merits, yet we should be induc'd by the measures of his Bounty, to love him, as we can. If this do not present him lovely to us, we own him rather a Devil than a God: If his Goodness moved him to frame Creatures, his Goodness moved him also to frame Creatures for himself, and his own glory. 'Tis a mighty wrong to him, not to look with a delightful Eye upon the Marks of it, and return an Affection to God in some measure suitable to his liberality to us; We are descended as low as Brutes, if we understand him not to be the Perfect Good; and we are descended as low as Devils, if our Affections are not attracted by it.

1. *If God were not Infinitely Good, he could not be the Object of Supreme Love.* If he were Finitely Good, there might be other things as good as God, and then God in justice could not challenge our choicest Affections to him, above any thing else: It would be a defect of goodness in him, to demand it, because he would despoil that, which were equally good with him, of its due and right to our affections, which it might claim from us upon the account of its goodness: God would be unjust to challenge more than was due to him; for he would claim that chiefly to himself, which another had a lawful share in. Nothing can be supremely loved, that hath not a Triumphant Excellency above all other things: Where there is an equality of goodness, neither can justly challenge a Supremacy, but only an equality of Affection.

2. *This Attribute of Goodness renders him more lovely than any other Attribute.* He never requires our Adoration of him so much, as the strongest or wisest, but as the best of Beings: He uses this chiefly, to constrain and allure us. Why would he be fear'd or worshipt, but because *there is forgiveness with him* \*? 'Tis for his goodness sake, that he is sued to by his People in distress, † *For thy goodness sake, O Lord.* Men may be admir'd because of their knowledge, but they are affected because of their goodness: The will in all the variety of Objects it pursues, centers in this one thing of good as the term of its appetite. All things are belov'd by Men, because they have been better'd by them, or because they expect to be the better for them. Severity can never conquer enmity, and kindle love: Were there nothing but wrath in the Deity, it would make him be fear'd, but render him odious, and that to an innocent Nature. As the *Spouse* speaks of Christ, \* *so we may of God*: Though she commends him for his *Head*, the excellency of his Wisdom, his *Eyes*, the extent of his Omniscience, his *Hands*, the greatness of his Power, and his *Legs*, the swiftness of his Motions, and ways to and for his People, yet the *sweetness of his Mouth*, in his gracious Words and Promises closes all, and is follow'd with nothing but an Exclamation, that *he is altogether lovely*, Verse 16. His Mouth in pronouncing Pardon of Sin, and justification of the Person, presents him most lovely. His Power to do good is admirable, but his Will to do good is amiable: This puts a gloss upon all his other Attributes. Though he had knowledge to understand the depth of our necessities, and power to prevent them, or rescue us from them, yet his knowledge would be fruitless, and his power useless, if he were of a rigid Nature, and not touched with any sentiments of kindness.

\* Psal. 130. 4.

† Psal. 25. 7.

\* Cant. 5. 16.  
11.



3. *This Goodness therefore lays a strong Obligation upon us.* 'Tis true he is lovely in regard of his absolute goodness, or the goodness of his Nature, but we should hardly be perswaded to return him an affection, without his Relative goodness, his Benefits to his Creatures; We are oblig'd by both to love him.

1. *By his Absolute Goodness, or the Goodness of his Nature.* Suppose a Creature had drawn its Original from something else, wherein God had no influx; and had never received the least mite of a benefit from him, but from some other hand, yet the infinite Excellency and goodness of his Nature, would merit the love of that Creature, and it would act sordidly and disingenuously, if it did not discover a mighty Respect for God: For what ingenuity could there be in a Rational Creature, that were possessed with no esteem for any Nature fill'd with unbounded goodness and Excellency, though he had never been oblig'd to him for any favour? That Man is accounted odious, and justly despicable by Man, that reproaches and disesteems, nay, that doth not value a Person of a high Vertue in himself, and an universal goodness and Charity to others, though himself never stood in need of his Charity, and never had any benefit conveyed from his hands, nor ever saw his face, or had any commerce with him: A value of such a Person is but a just due to the natural claim of Vertue. And indeed, the first Object of Love is God in the Excellency of his own Nature, as the first Object of Love in Marriage, is the *Person*; the Portion is a thing consequent upon it. To love God only for his Benefits, is to love our selves first, and him secondarily: To love God for his own Goodness and Excellency, is a true love of God; a love of him for himself. That flaming Fire in his own Breast, though we have not a Spark of it, hath a right to kindle one in ours to him.

2. *By his Relative Goodness, or that of his Benefits.* Though the Excellency of his own Nature, wherein there is a combination of Goodness, must needs ravish an apprehensive Mind; yet a reflection upon his imparted Kindness, both in the Beings we have from him, and the support we have by him, must enhance this Estimation. When the Excellency of his Nature, and the Expressions of his Bounty are in conjunction, the Excellency of his own Nature, renders him estimable in a way of Justice, and the greatness of his Benefits renders him valuable in a way of Gratitude: The first ravisheth, and the other allures and melts: He hath enough in his Nature to attract, and sufficient in his Bounty to engage our Affections. The Excellency of his Nature is strong enough of it self, to blow up our Affections to him, were there not a Malignity in our hearts, that represents him under the Notion of an Enemy; therefore in regard of our Corrupt State, the consideration of Divine Largesses, comes in for a share in the Elevation of our Affections. For indeed 'tis a very hard thing, for a Man to love another, though never so well qualified, and of an eminent Vertue, while he believes him to be his Enemy, and one that will severely handle him; though he hath before received many good turns from him: The Vertue, Valour, and Courtesie of a Prince, will hardly make him affected by those, against whom he is in Arms, and that are daily pilfer'd by his Souldiers, unless they have hopes of a Reparation from him, and future security from injuries. Christ in the Repetition of the Command to *love God with all our mind, with all our heart, and with all our Soul*, i. e. with such an ardency, above all things which glitter in our Eye, or can be Created by him, considers him as *our God*\*. And the *Psalmist* considers him as one, that had kindly employ'd his power for him, in the eruption of his love, *Psal. 18. 1. I will love thee Oh Lord my strength*; And so in *Psal. 116. 1. I love the Lord because he hath heard the voice of my supplications*. An esteem of the Benefactor, is inseparable from gratitude for the received Benefits: And should not then the unparallel'd kindness of God, advance him in our thoughts, much more than slighter Courtesies do a Created Benefactor in ours? 'Tis an obligation on every Mans Nature, to answer Bounty with gratitude, and Goodness with love. Hence you never knew any Man, nor can the Records of Eternity produce any Man, or Devil, that ever

\* Mat. 22. 37.



ever hated any Person, or any thing as good in it self: 'Tis a thing absolutely repugnant to the Nature of any Rational Creature. The Devils hate not God, because he is good; but because he is not so good to them, as they would have him; because he will not unlock their Chains, turn them into liberty, and restore them to Happiness, *i. e.* because he will not desert the Rights of abus'd Goodness. But how should we send up flames of love to that God, since we are under his direct Beams, and enjoy such plentiful influences! If the Sun is comely in it self, yet 'tis more amiable to us, by the light we see, and the warmth we feel.

1. *The greatness of his Benefits have reason to affect us with a love to him.* The Impress he made upon our Souls, when he extracted us from the darkness of nothing: The Comeliness he hath put upon us, by his own Breath: The Care he took of our Recovery, when we had lost our selves: The Expence he was at for our Regaining our defac'd Beauty: The gift he made of his Son: The Affectionate Calls we have heard to over-master our Corrupt Appetites, move us to Repentance, and make us disaffect our beloved Misery: The loud sound of his Word in our Ears, and the more inward knockings of his Spirit in our Heart: The offering us the Gift of himself, and the Everlasting Happiness he Courts us to; besides those common favours we enjoy in the World, which are all the Streams of his rich Bounty. The voice of all is loud enough to sollicite our love, and the Merit of all ought to be strong enough to engage our love: *There is none like the God of Jerusalem, who rides upon the Heaven in thy help, and in his Excellency on the Sky\*.*

\* Deut. 33. 26.

2. *The unmeritedness of them doth inhanse this.* 'Tis but reason to love him, who hath loved us first\*: Hath he placed his delight upon any, when they were nothing, and after they were Sinful; and shall he set his delight upon such vile Persons, and shall not we set our love upon so Excellent an Object as himself? How base are we, if his goodness doth not constrain us to affect him, who hath been so free in his favour to us, who have merited the quite contrary at his hands? *If his tender Mercies are over all his Works\**, He ought for it, to be esteem'd by all his Works, that are capable of a Rational Estimation.

\* 1 John 4. 19.

3. *Goodness in Creatures makes them estimable, much more should the Goodness of God render him lovely to us.* If we love a little spark of goodness in this or that Creature, if a drop be so delicious to us, shall not the immense Sun of Goodness, the ever-flowing Fountain of all, be much more delightful? The Original Excellency always out-strips what is deriv'd from it: If so mean and contracted an Object as a little Creature deserves Estimation for a little Mite communicated to it, so great and extended a goodness, as is in the Creator, much more merits it at our hands: He is good after the infinite methods of a Deity; A weak Resemblance is lovely, much more amiable than must be the incomprehensible Original of that Beauty. We love Creatures for what we think to be good in them, though it may be hurtful; And shall we not love God, who is a real and unblemish'd Goodness? And from whose hand are pour'd out, all those Blessings, that are conveyed to us by second Causes. The Object that delights us, the Capacity we have to delight in it, are both from him; Our love therefore to him should transcend the Affection we bear to any Instruments he moves for our welfare. *Among the Gods, there is none like thee O Lord, neither are there any Works like unto thy Works\**. Among the pleasantest Creatures there is none like the Creator, nor any Goodness like unto his Goodness. Shall we love the Food that Nourisheth us, and the Medicine that Cures us, and the Silver whereby we furnish our selves with useful Commodities? Shall we love a Horse, or Dog, for the benefits we have by them? And shall not the Spring of all those, draw our Souls after it, and make us aspire to the honour of loving, and embracing him, who hath stor'd every Creature with that which may pleasure us? But instead of endeavouring to parallel our Affection with his Kindness, we endeavour to make our Disingenuity as extensive and towering as his Divine Goodness.

\* Psal. 86. 8.

4. *This is the true end of the manifestation of his Goodness, that he might appear amiable, and have a Return of Affection.* Did God display his Goodness only



only to be thought of, or to be loved? 'Tis the want of such a return, that he hath usually aggravated, from the Benefits he hath bestow'd upon Men. Every thought of him should be attended with a Motion futable to the Excellency of his Nature and Works. Can we think those nobler Spirits, the Angels, look upon themselves, or those Frames of things in the Heavens and Earth without starting some practical Affection to him for them? Their knowledge of his Excellency and Works, cannot be a lazy Contemplation: 'Tis impossible their Wills and Affections should be a thousand Miles distant from their Understandings in their Operations. 'Tis not the least part of his condescending Goodness, to Court in such Methods the Affections of us Worms, and manifest his desire to be beloved by us. Let us give him then that Affection he deserves, as well as demands, and which cannot be withheld from him without horrible Sacrilege. There is nothing worthy of love besides him; Let no Fire be kindled in our hearts, but what may ascend directly to him.

7. The seventh Instruction is this, *This renders God a fit Object of trust and confidence.* Since none is good but God, none can be a full and satisfactory Ground or Object of confidence but God; As all things derive their beings, so they derive their helpfulness to us from God; they are not therefore the principal Objects of trust, but that Goodness alone that renders them fit Instruments of our support; They can no more challenge from us a stable Confidence, than they can a Supream Affection. 'Tis by this the *Psalmist* allures Men to a trust in him; \* *Taste, and see, how good the Lord is,* What is the consequence? *Blessed is the Man, that trusts in thee.* The Voice of Divine Goodness sounds nothing more intelligibly, and a taste of it produceth nothing more effectually than this. As the Vials of his Justice are to make us fear him, so the Streams of his Goodness are to make us rely on him. As his Patience is design'd to broach our Repentance, so his Goodness is most proper to strengthen our assurance in him: That Goodness which surmounted so many difficulties, and conquer'd so many motions, that might be made against any repeated Exercise of it, after it had been abus'd by the first Rebellion of Man: That Goodness that after so much contempt of it, appeared in such a Majestick tenderness, and threw aside those impediments, which Men had cast in the way of Divine Inclinations: This Goodness is the foundation of all reliance upon God. Who is better than God? And therefore, Who more to be trusted than God? As his Power cannot act any thing weakly, so his Goodness cannot act any thing unbecomingly, and unworthy of his Infinite Majesty. And here consider,

1. *Goodness is the first motive of trust.* Nothing but this could be the encouragement to Man, had he stood in a State of Innocence, to present himself before God; The Majesty of God would have constrain'd him to keep his due distance, but the Goodness of God could only hearten his Confidence; 'Tis nothing else now, that can preserve the same temper in us in our lapsed Condition. To regard him only as the Judge of our Crimes, will drive us from him; but only the regard of him as the Donor of our Blessings, will allure us to him. The principal Foundation of *Faith* is not the Word of God, but God himself, and God as consider'd in this Perfection. As the Goodness of God in his Invitations, and Providential Blessings, *leads us to Repentance*\*; so by the same reason the Goodness of God by his Promises, leads us to Reliance. If God be not first believed to be good, he would not be believed at all, in any thing that he speaks or swears: If you were not satisfied in the goodness of a Man, though he should swear a thousand times, you would value neither his Word nor Oath, as any security. Many times where we are certain of the goodness of a Man, we are willing to trust him without his promise. This Divine Perfection gives Credit to the Divine Promises; they of themselves would not be a sufficient ground of trust, without an apprehension of his truth; nor would his truth be very comfortable, without a belief of his good will, whereby we are assured, that what he promises to give, he gives liberally, free, and without regret. The *truth* of the Promiser, makes the Promise

\* *Psalm*. 34. 8.

\* *Rom.* 2. 4.



Promise Credible, but the *goodness* of the Promiser makes it cheerfully relied on. In *Psal.* 73. *Asaph's* Penitential Psalm for his distrust of God, he begins the *first Verse* with an assertion of this Attribute, *v. 1. Truly God is good to Israel*, and ends with this fruit of it, *Verse 28. I will put my trust in the Lord God.* 'Tis a mighty ill Nature, that receives not with assurance the Dictates of Infinite Goodness, (that cannot deceive or frustrate the hopes, we conceive of him) that is unconceivably more abundant in the breast and inclinations of the Promiser, than expressible in the words of his Promise: *All true faith works by love* \*, and therefore necessarily includes a particular eying of this Excellency in the Divine Nature, which renders him amiable, and is the Motive and Encouragement of a love to him. His Power indeed is a foundation of trust, but his *Goodness* is the principal Motive of it. His Power without good Will would be dangerous, and could not allure Affection; and his good Will without Power, would be useless; and though it might merit a love, yet could not create a Confidence; both in conjunction are strong grounds of hope; Especially since his Goodness is of the same infinity with his Wisdom and Power; and that he can be no more wanting in the effusions of this upon them that seek him, than in his Wisdom to contrive, or his Power to effect his Designs and Works.

\* Gal. 5. 6.

2. *This goodness is more the foundation and motive of trust under the Gospel, than under the Law.* They under the Law had more evidences of Divine Power, and their trust eyed that much; though there was an eminency of goodness in the frequent deliverances they had, yet the Power of God had a more glorious dress, than his Goodness, because of the extraordinary and miraculous ways whereby he brought those deliverances about. Therefore in the Catalogue of Believers in *Heb. 11.* you shall find the Power of God, to be the Center of their Rest and Trust; and their Faith was built upon the extraordinary Marks of Divine Power, which were frequently visible to them. But *under the Gospel*, goodness and love was intended by God, to be the chief Object of trust; suitable to the Excellency of that Dispensation, he would have an Exercise of more ingenuity in the Creatures: Therefore 'tis said, *Hosea 3. 5. A promise of Gospel-times, They shall fear God and his goodness in the later days*, when they shall return to seek the Lord, and David their King. 'Tis not said, they shall fear God, and his Power, but the Lord and his goodness, or the Lord for his goodness: Fear is often in the Old Testament taken for Faith, or Trust. This Divine Goodness, the Object of Faith, is that goodness discover'd in *David their King*; the *Messiah*, our *Jesus*. God in this Dispensation recommends his goodness and love, and reveals it more clearly than other Attributes, that the Soul might have more prevailing and sweeter attractives, to confide in him.

3. *A confidence in him gives him the glory of his goodness.* Most Nations that had nothing but the light of Nature, thought it a great part of the Honour that was due to God, to implore his Goodness; and cast their Cares upon it. To do good, is the most honourable thing in the World, and to acknowledge a goodness in a way of confidence, is as high an honour as we can give to it, and a great part of gratitude for what it hath already express'd: Therefore we find often, that an acknowledgment of one Benefit received, was attended with a trust in him, for what they should in the future need; \* *Thou hast delivered my Soul from Death, wilt thou not deliver my Feet from falling?* So *2 Cor. 1. 10.* And they who have been most eminent for their trust in him, have had the greatest Elogies and Commendations from him. As a diffidence doth disparage this Perfection, thinking it meaner and shallower, than it is; so Confidence highly honours it. We never please him more, than when we trust in him, \* *The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his Mercy.* He takes it for an Honour, to have this Attribute exalted by such a Carriage of his Creature. He is no less offended, when we think his heart straitned, as if he were a Parsimonious God, than when we think his Arm shortned, as if he were an impotent and feeble God.

\* *Psal. 124. 13.*\* *Psal. 147. 11.*

Let us therefore make this use of his Goodness, to hearten our Faith. When we

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are fear'd by the terrors of his Justice, when we are dazzled by the arts of his Wildom, and confounded by the splendour of his Majesty, we may take refuge in the Sanctuary of his Goodness; this will encourage us, as well as astonish us; Whereas the consideration of his other Attributes would only amaze us, but can never refresh us, but when they are consider'd, marching under the Conduct and Banners of this. When all the other Perfections of the Divine Nature are lookt upon in conjunction with this Excellency, each of them send forth ravishing and benign influences upon the applying Creature. 'Tis more advantageous to depend upon Divine Bounty, than our own Cares; We may have better assurance upon this account in his Cares for us, than in ours for our selves. Our goodness for our selves is Finite, and besides we are too ignorant: His goodness is Infinite, and attended with an infinite Wildom; we have reason to distrust our selves, not God. We have reason to be at rest, under that kind influence we have so often experimented; He hath so much goodness, that he can have no deceit: His goodness in making the Promise, and his goodness in working the heart to a Reliance on it, are grounds of trust in him; \* Remember thy word to thy Servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. If his Promise did not please him, why did he make it? If Reliance on the Promise, doth not please him, why did his Goodness work it? It would be inconsistent with his Goodness, to mock his Creature, and it would be the highest Mockery to publish his Word, and Create a temper in the heart of his supplicant, suited to his Promise, which he never intended to satisfy. He can as little wrong his Creature, as wrong himself; and therefore can never disappoint that Faith, which in his own methods casts it self into the arms of his Kindness, and is his own Workmanship, and calls him Author. That Goodness that imparted it self so freely in Creation, will not neglect those nobler Creatures that put their trust in him. This renders God a fit Object for trust and confidence.

\* Psal. 119.  
45.

8. The eighth Instruction; *This renders God worthy to be obeyed and honour'd.* There is an Excellency in God, to allure, as well as Sovereignty to enjoin Obedience: The infinite Excellency of his Nature is so great, that if his Goodness had promised us nothing to encourage our Obedience, we ought to prefer him before our selves, devote our selves to serve him, and make his glory our greatest content; but much more when he hath given such admirable Expressions of his Liberality, and stor'd us with hopes of richer and fuller Streams of it. When David consider'd the Absolute Goodness of his Nature, and the Relative Goodness of his Benefits, he presently expresseth an ardent desire to be acquainted with the Divine Statutes, that he might make ingenuous returns in a dutiful observance; \* *Thou art good, and thou dost good, teach me thy Statutes.* As his Goodness is the Original, so the acknowledgment of it is the end of all, which cannot be without an observance of his Will. His Goodness requires of us an ingenuous, not a servile Obedience.

\* Psal. 119.  
68.

And this is Establish'd upon two Foundations.

1. Because *the Bounty of God hath laid upon us the strongest Obligations.* The strength of an Obligation depends upon the greatness and number of the Benefits received. The more Excellent the favours are, which are conferr'd upon any Person, the more right hath the Benefactor, to claim an observance from the Person better'd by him. Much of the Rule and Empire, which hath been in several Ages conferred by Communities upon Princes, hath had its first spring from a sense of the advantages they have receiv'd by them, either in protecting them from their Enemies, or rescuing them from an ignoble Captivity; in enlarging their Territories, or increasing their Wealth. Conquest hath been the Original of a constrain'd, but Beneficence always the Original of a voluntary and free Subjection\*. Obedience to Parents is founded upon their right, because they are instrumental in bestowing upon us Being and Life; and because this of life is so great a benefit, the Law of Nature never dissolves this Obligation of Obeying, and Honouring Parents; 'Tis as long liv'd as the Law of Nature, and hath an universal practice, by the strength of that Law in all parts of the World: And those rightful Chains are not unlockt, but by that which unties the knot between Soul and Body. Much more hath God

\* Amyrald,  
Discers. p. 65.

a Right



a Right to be obey'd and reverenced, who is the principal Benefactor, and mov'd all those second Causes, to impart to us, what conduc'd to our advantage. The just Authority of God over us, results from the superlativeness of his Blessings he hath pour'd down upon us, which cannot be equal'd, much less exceeded by any other. As therefore upon this account he hath a claim to our choicest Affections, so he hath also to most exact Obedience; and neither one, nor other can be denied him, without a sordid and disingenuous ingratitude; God therefore aggravates the Rebellion of the Jews, from the cares he had in the bringing them up\*, and the miraculous deliverance from Egypt†, implying that those Benefits were strong Obligations to an ingenuous observance of him.

\* Isaiah 2. 2.  
† Jer. 11. 7, 8.

2. It is Establish'd upon this, *That God can enjoin the observance of nothing but what is good.* He may by the Right of his Sovereign Dominion, command that which is indifferent in its own Nature; As in positive Laws, The not eating the Fruit of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which had not been evil in it self, set aside the Command of God to the contrary; and likewise in those Ceremonial Laws he gave the Jews: But in regard of the transcendent Goodness and Righteousness of his Nature, he will not, he cannot Command any thing that is evil in it self, or repugnant to the true interest of his Creature: And God never oblig'd the Creature to any thing, but what was so free from damaging it, that it highly conduc'd to its good and welfare; and therefore it is said, \* *That his Commands are not grievous*: Not grievous in their own Nature, nor grievous to one possess'd with a true Reason. The Command given to Adam in Paradise was not grievous in it self, nor could he ever have thought it so, but upon a false supposition instill'd into him by the Tempter. There is a pleasure results from the Law of God to a holy Rational Nature, a sweetness tasted both by the Understanding and by the Will, for they both rejoice the heart, and enlighten the Eyes of the Mind\*. God being Essentially Wisdom and Goodness, cannot deviate from that Goodness in any Orders he gives the Creature; whatsoever he Enacts, must be agreeable to that Rule, and therefore he can Will nothing, but what is good and excellent, and what is good for the Creature; For since he hath put Originally into Man a Natural Instinct, to desire that which is good, He would never Enact any thing for the Creatures observance, that might controul that desire imprinted by himself, but what might countenance that Impression of his own hand; for if God did otherwise, he would contradict his own Natural Law, and be a Deluder of his Creatures, if he impress'd upon them desires one way, and order'd directions another. The truth is, all his Moral Precepts are Comely in themselves, and they receive not their goodness from Gods positive Command, but that Command supposeth their goodness: If every thing were good because God loves it, or because God wills it, i. e. That Gods loving it, or willing it, made that good, which was not good before, then as Camero well argues somewhere, Gods goodness would depend upon his loving himself; He was good because he loved himself, and was not good, till he loved himself; whereas indeed Gods loving himself, doth not make him good, but supposeth him good: He was good in the Order of Nature, before he loved himself, and his being good, was the ground of his loving himself, because as was said before, if there were any thing better than God, God would love that: For it is inconsistent with the Nature of God, and Infinite Goodness, not to love that which is good, and not to love that supremely, which is the Supream Good. Further to understand it, you may consider, If the Question be askt, Why God loves himself? You would think it a reasonable Answer to say; Because he is good. But if the Question be askt, Why God is good? You would think that Answer, because he loves himself, would be destitute of Reason; but the true Answer would be, Because his Nature is so, and he could not be God, if he were not good: Therefore Gods goodness is in order of our conception before his self-love, and not his self-love before his goodness: So the Moral things God Commands, are good in themselves, before God Commands them; and such, that if God should Command the contrary, it would openly speak him evil, and unrighteous. Abstract from Scripture, and weigh things in your own Reason; Could you conceive God good, if he should Command a Creature not to love

\* 1 Joh. 5. 3.

\* Psal. 15. 8.

As a Heathen  
Maximus Ty-  
rius, *Dissert.*  
22. p. 220.  
ὁ γὰρ θεὸς  
οὐδὲ βέλαιται  
ἀλλὰ πῶς τὸ  
ἐξελίσσεται.



him? Could you preserve the Notion of a good Nature in him, if he did Command Murder, Adultery, Tyranny, and Cutting of Throats? You would wonder, to what purpose he made the World, and fram'd it for Society, if such things were order'd, that should deface all Comeliness of Society: The Moral Commands given in the Word, appeared of themselves very beautiful to meer Reason, that had no knowledge of the Written Law; they are good, and because they are so, his goodness had moved his Sovereign Authority strictly to enjoin them. Now this goodness whereby he cannot oblige a Creature to any thing that is evil, speaks him highly worthy of our Obedience, and our Disobedience to his Law to be full of unconceivable Malignity: That is the last thing.

2. Use is a Use of *Comfort*. He is a Good without mixture, Good without weariness, *none good but God*, none good purely, none good inexhaustibly but God; because he is good, we may upon our speaking expect his instruction; \* *Good is the Lord, therefore will he teach Sinners in his way.* His goodness makes him stoop to be the Tutor to those Worms that lie prostrate before him; and though they are Sinners full of filth, he drives them not from his School, nor denies them his Medicines, if they apply themselves to him as a Physician. He is good in removing the Punishment due to our Crimes, and good in bestowing Benefits, not due to our Merits; because he is good, Penitent Believers may expect forgiveness, \* *Thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive.* He acts not according to the rigor of the Law, but willingly grants his Pardon to those that flee into the Arms of the Mediator: His goodness makes him more ready to forgive, than our necessities make us desirous to enjoy: He charged not upon Job his impatient Expressions in Cursing the day of his Birth, his goodness passed that over in silence, and extolls him, for speaking the thing that is right, right in the main, (\* when he charges his Friends, for *not speaking of him, the thing that is right, as his Servant Job had done.*) He is so good, that if we offer the least thing sincerely, he will graciously receive it; If we have not a Lamb to offer, a Pigeon, or Turtle shall be accepted upon his Altar: He stands not upon Costly presents, but sincerely tender'd Services. All Conditions are sweeten'd by it; whatsoever any in the World enjoy, is from a redundancy of this goodness; but whatsoever a good Man enjoys, is from a propriety in this goodness.

1. Here is *Comfort in our Addresses to him*. If he be a Fountain and Sea of Goodness, he cannot be weary of doing good, no more than a Fountain or Sea are of flowing. All goodness delights to communicate it self: Infinite goodness hath then an infinite delight, in expressing it self; 'tis a part of his goodness, not to be weary of shewing it; He can never then be weary of being solicited, for the effusions of it; If he rejoices over his People to do them good, he will rejoyce in any opportunities offer'd to him, to honour his Goodness, and gladly meet with a fit Subject for it: He therefore delights in Prayer; Never can we so delight in addressing, as he doth in imparting: He delights more in our Prayers, than we can our selves: Goodness is not pleased with shyness. To what purpose did his immense Bounty bestow his Son upon us, but that we should be accepted both in our Persons and Petitions? \* *His Eyes are upon the Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Cry*; He fixes the Eye of his Goodness upon them, and opens the Ears of his Goodness for them; He is pleased to behold them, and pleased to listen to them, as if he had no pleasure in any thing else: He loves to be sought to, to give a vent to his Bounty; \* *Acquaint thy self with God, and thereby good shall come unto thee.* The word signifies, to *accustom* our selves to God; The more we accustom our selves in speaking, the more he will accustom himself in giving: He loves not to keep his Goodness close under lock and key, as Men do their Treasures. If we *knock*, he opens his Exchequer; His Goodness is as flexible to our importunities, as his Power is invincible by the Arm of a silly Worm: He thinks his Liberality Honour'd, by being apply'd to, and your Address to be a Recompense for his Expence. There is no reason to fear, since he hath so kindly invited us, but he will as heartily welcome us: The Nature of Goodness is to compassionate, and communicate, to pity and relieve, and that with a heartiness and cheerfulness: Man is weary of being often solicited, because he hath

\* Psal. 25. 8.

\* Psal. 86. 5.

\* Job 42. 7.

\* Eph. 1. 6.

† Psal. 34. 15.

\* Job 22. 21.

\* Matth. 7. 7.



hath a finite, not a bottomless goodness: He gives sometimes to be rid of his Suppliant, not to encourage him to a second approach. But every Experience God gives us of his Bounty, is a Motive to solicit him afresh, and a kind of Obligation he hath laid upon himself, to *renew it* \*: 'Tis one part of his goodness, that it is boundless and bottomless; We need not fear the wasting of it, nor any weariness in him to bestow it. The Stock cannot be spent, and infinite Kindness can never become niggardly; When we have enjoyed it, there is still an infinite Ocean in him to refresh us, and as full Streams as ever to supply us. What an encouragement have we to draw near to God? We run in our straits, to those that we think have most good will, as well as power to relieve and protect us. The oftner we come to him, and the nearer we approach to him, the more of his influences we shall feel: As the nearer the Sun, the more of its heat insinuates it self into us. The greatness of God joyned with his goodness, hath more reason to encourage our approach to him, than our flight from him, because his greatness never goes unattended with his goodness; and if he were not so good, he would not be so great in the apprehensions of any Creature. How may his goodness, in the great gift of his Son encourage us to apply to him; since he hath set him as a days-Man between himself and us; and appointed him an Advocate, to present our Requests for us, and speed them at the Throne of Grace, and he never leaves, till Divine Goodness subscribes a *Fiat*, to our believing and just Petitions?

\* 1 Sam. 17.  
37.

2. Here is *Comfort in Afflictions*. What can we fear from the conduct of infinite Goodness? Can his hand be heavy upon those that are humble before him? They are the hands of infinite Power indeed, but there is not any motion of it upon his People, but is order'd by a Goodness, as infinite as his Power; which will not suffer any Affliction, to be too sharp or too long. By what ways soever he conveys Grace to us here, and prepares us for glory hereafter, they are good, and those are the good things, he hath chiefly obliged himself to give; \* *Grace and glory will he give, and no good thing will he withhold from them, that walk uprightly*. This David comforted himself with, in that which his devout Soul accounted the greatest Calamity, his *absence from the Courts, and House of God*. Not an ill will, but a good will directs his Scourges; He is not an idle Spectator of our Combats; His thoughts are fuller of kindness, than ours in any case can be of trouble: And because he is good, he wills the best good in every thing he acts; in Exercising Vertue, or Correcting Vice: There is no Affliction without some apparent mixtures of goodness; When he speaks, how he hath smitten Israel\*; He presently adds, † *Have I been a Wilderness to Israel, a Land of darkness?* Though he led them through a Desert, yet he was not a desert to them; He was no Land of darkness to them; While they marched through a Land of barrenness, he was a Caterer to provide them *Manna*, and a place of *broad Rivers*, and Streams. How often hath Divine Goodness made our Afflictions our Consolations? Our Diseases our Medicines, and his gentle Strokes reviving Cordials? How doth he provide for us above our deserts, even while he doth punish us beneath our Merits? Divine Goodness can no more mean ill, than Divine Wisdom can be mistaken in its End, or Divine Power over-ruled in its Actions. *Charity thinks no evil*\*, Charity in the Stream doth not, much less doth Charity in the Fountain. To be afflicted by a hand of Goodness, hath something comfortable in it, when to be afflicted by an Evil hand, is very odious. *Elijah* who was loth to die by the hand of a Whorish, Idolatrous *Jezabel*, was very desirous to die by the hand of God\*. He accounted it a misery, to have died by her hand, who hated him, and had nothing but Cruelty; and therefore fled from her, when he wished for death, as a desirable thing by the hand of that God, who had been good to him, and could not but be good in whatsoever he acted.

\* Psal. 84. 12.

Verse 2.

\* Jer. 2. 30.  
† Verse 31.

\* 1 Cor. 13.  
5.

\* 1 King. 19.  
2, 3, 4.

3. The third Comfort flowing from this Doctrine of the Goodness of God, is, 'Tis a ground of assurance of *Happiness*. If God be so good, that nothing is better, and loves himself, as he is good, he cannot be wanting in love to those, that resemble his Nature, and imitate his Goodness: He cannot but love his own Image of goodness; where ever he finds it, he cannot but be bountiful to it;



for it is impossible there can be any love to any Object, without wishing well to it, and doing well for it. If the Soul loves God as its chiefest good, God will love the Soul as his pious Servant : As he hath offer'd to them the highest allurements, so he will not withhold the choicest communications. Goodness cannot be a deluding thing ; It cannot consist with the nobleness and largeness of this Perfection, to invite the Creature to him, and leave the Creature empty of him, when it comes. 'Tis inconsistent with this Perfection, to give the Creature a knowledge of himself, and a desire of enjoyment larger than that knowledge, a desire to know, and enjoy him perpetually, yet never intend to bestow an Eternal Communication of himself upon it. The Nature of Man was erected by the goodness of God, but with an enlarg'd desire for the highest Good, and a Capacity of enjoying it. Can Goodness be thought to be deceitful, to frustrate its own Work, betired with its own Effusions, to let a gracious Soul groan under its burthen, and never resolve to ease him of it ? To see delightfully the aspirings of the Creature to another State, and resolve, never to admit him to a happy issue of those desires ? 'Tis not agreeable to this unconceivable Perfection, to be unconcern'd in the longings of his Creature, since their first longings were placed in them, by that Goodness which is so free from mocking the Creature, or falling short of its well grounded Expectations or Desires, that it infinitely exceeds them. If Man had continued in Innocence, the goodness of God without question would have continued him in Happiness : And since he hath had so much goodness, to restore Man, would it not be dishonourable to that goodness, to break his own Conditions, and defeat the believing Creature of Happiness, after it hath complied with his terms ? He is a Believers God in Covenant, and is a God in the utmost extent of this Attribute, as well as of any other ; and therefore will not communicate mean and shallow Benefits, but according to the grandeur of it, Sovereign and Divine, such as the gift of a happy Immortality. Since he had no obligation upon him, to make any promise, but the sweetness of his own Nature, the same is as strong upon him, to make all the words of his Grace good ; They cannot be invalid in any one tittle of them, as long as his Nature remains the same ; And his goodness cannot be diminish'd, without the impairing of his Godhead, since it is inseparable from it. Divine Goodness will not let any Man serve God for nought ; He hath promised our weak Obedience, more than any Man in his right Wits can say it Merits : \* *A Cup of cold Water shall not lose its Reward.* He will manifest our good actions, as he gave so high a testimony to Job, in the face of the Devil his Accuser : It will not only be the happiness of the Soul, but of the Body, the whole Man, since Soul and Body were in conjunction in the acts of Righteousness ; it consists not with the goodness of God to reward the one, and to let the other lie in the ruins of its first nothing : To bestow joy upon the one, for its being principal, and leave the other without any Sentiments of joy, that was instrumental in those good Works, both commanded, and approv'd by God : He that had the goodness to pity our Original Dust, will not want a goodness to advance it : And if we put off our Bodies, 'tis but afterwards to put them on repair'd, and fresher. From this Goodness, the Upright may expect all the Happiness their Nature is capable of.

\* Matth. 10.  
41.

\* Nah. 1. 7.

\* Prov. 11. 8.

4. *It is a ground of Comfort in the midst of publick dangers.* This hath more sweetness in it to support us, than the malice of Enemies hath to deject us ; because he is good, he is a *strong hold in the day of trouble* \*. If his goodness extends to all his Creatures, it will much more extend to those that honour him : If the Earth be full of his goodness, that part of Heaven which he hath upon Earth, shall not be empty of it. He hath a Goodness often to deliver the Righteous, and a Justice to put the Wicked in his stead \*. When his People have been under the power of their Enemies, he hath chang'd the Scene, and put the Enemies under the power of his People : He hath clapt upon them the same Bolts, which they did upon his Servants. How comfortable is this Goodness, that hath yet maintain'd us in the midst of dangers, preserved us in the mouth of Lyons, quencht kindled Fire ; Hitherto rescued us from design'd ruine subtilly hatcht, and supported us in the midst of Men, very

passionate



passionate for our destruction? How hath this watchful goodness been a Sanctuary to us in the midst of an upper Hell?

3. The third Use is of *Exhortation*.

1. *How should we endeavour after the enjoyment of God as good?* How earnestly should we desire him? As there is no other Goodness worthy of our supreme love, so there is no other Goodness worthy our most ardent thirst. Nothing deserves the name of a desirable good, but as it tends to the attainment of this: Here we must pitch our desires, which otherwise will terminate in nullities, or unconceivable disturbances.

1. Consider, *nothing but good can be the Object of a Rational Appetite*. The Will cannot direct its motion to any thing under the notion of evil, evil in it self, or evil to it; whatsoever Courts it, must present it self in the quality of a good in its own nature, or in its present Circumstances to the present state and condition of the desire; it will not else touch or affect the Will. This is the language of that faculty, *Who will shew me any good* \*? And good is as inseparably the Object of the wills motion, as truth is of the *understandings* inquiry. Whatsoever a Man would allure another to comply with, he must propose to the Person under the notion of some beneficialness to him in point of honour, profit, or pleasure; To act after this manner, is the proper Character of a Rational Creature. And though that which is evil, is often embrac'd, instead of that which is good; and what we entertain as conducing to our felicity, proves our misfortune, yet that is from our ignorance, and not from a formal choice of it as evil; for what evil is chosen, it is not possible to choose under the conception of evil, but under the appearance of a good, though it be not so in reality. 'Tis inseparable from the Wills of all Men, to propose to themselves that which in the opinion and judgment of their understandings or imagination is good, though they often mistake and cheat themselves.

\* Psal. 4. 6.

2. Since that God is the Object of a Rational Appetite, *the purest, best, and most universal good, such as God is, ought to be most sought after*. Since good only is the Object of a Rational Appetite, all the motions of our Souls should be carried to the first and best Good: A real good is most desirable; The greatest Excellency of the Creatures cannot speak them so, since by the Corruption of Man they are *subjected to vanity* \*. God is the most Excellent Good without any shadow: A real something without that nothing, which every Creature hath in its nature \*. A perfect good can only give us content; the best goodness in the Creature is but slender and imperfect; had not the venom of Corruption infus'd a vanity into it, the make of it speaks it finite, and the best qualities in it are bounded, and cannot give satisfaction to a Rational Appetite, which bears in its nature an imitation of Divine Infiniteness; and therefore can never find an Eternal rest in mean trifles. God is above the imperfection of all Creatures; Creatures are but drops of goodness, at best but shallow Streams; God is like a teeming Ocean, that can fill the largest as well as the narrowest Creek. He hath an accumulative goodness; several Creatures answer several necessities, but one God can answer all our wants: He hath an universal fulness, to overtop our universal emptiness: He contains in himself the sweetness of all other goods, and holds in his Bosom plentifully, what Creatures have in their Natures sparingly. Creatures are uncertain goods; As they begin to exist, so they may cease to be; they may be gone with a breath, they will certainly languish, if God blows upon them: \* The same Breath that rais'd them, can blast them; but who can rattle God of the least part of his Excellency? Mutability is inherent in the Nature of every Creature, as a Creature. All sublunary things are as gourds, that refresh us one moment with their presence, and the next fret us with their absence; Like fading Flowers strutting to day, and drooping to morrow \*; While we possess them, we cannot clip their Wings, that may carry them away from us, and may make us vainly seek, what we thought we firmly held. But God is as permanent a good, as he is a real one: He hath Wings to fly to them that seek him, but no Wings to fly from them for ever, and leave them. God is an universal good; that which is good to one, may be evil to another, what is desirable by one, may be refus'd as inconvenient for another:

\* Rom. 8. 20.

\* Isai. 40. 17.

\* Isai. 40. 24.

\* Isai. 40. 5.

But



But God being an universal, unstain'd good, is useful for all, convenient to the natures of all, but such as will continue in enmity against him: There is nothing in God can displease a Soul, that desires to please him; when we are darkness, he is a light to scatter it, when we are in want, he hath riches to relieve us, when we are in a Spiritual death, he is a Prince of life to deliver us, when we are defil'd, he is Holiness to purifie us: 'Tis in vain to fix our hearts any where but on him, in the desire of whom there is a delight, and in the enjoyment of whom there is an unconceivable pleasure.

3. He is to be most sought after, *since all things else that are desirable, had their goodness from him.* If any thing be desirable because of its goodness, God is much more desirable because of his, since all things are good by a participation, and nothing good but by his print upon it: As what Being Creatures have, was deriv'd to them by God, so what goodness they are possessed with, they were furnisht with it by God: All goodness flow'd from him, and all Created goodness is summed up in him. The Streams should not terminate our appetite, without aspiring to the Fountain. If the Waters in the Chancel which receive mixture, communicate a pleasure, the taste of the Fountain must be much more delicious: That Original Perfection of all things, hath an unconceivable beauty, above those things it hath fram'd. Since those things live not by their own strength, nor nourish us by their own liberality, but by the *Word of God*\*, that God that speaks them into life, and speaks them into usefulness, should be most ardently desir'd as the best. If the sparkling glory of the visible Heavens delight us, and the beauty, and bounty of the Earth please and refresh us, what should be the language of our Souls upon those views and tastes, but that of the *Psalmist*? *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth, that I can desire beside thee*\*? No greater good can possibly be desir'd, and no less good should be ardently desir'd: As he is the supream Good, so we should bear that regard to him as supreamly, and above all to thirst for him: As he is good, he is the Object of desire; as the choicest and first goodness, he is desirable with the greatest vehemency. *Give me Children, or else I die*, was an uncomely speech, \* the one was granted, and the other inflicted; she had Children, but the last cost her her life: But give me God, or I will not be content, is a gracious speech, wherein we cannot miscarry; All that God demands of us, is, that we should long for him, and look for our happiness only in him. That is the *first* thing, endeavour after the enjoyment of God as good.

2. *Often meditate on the goodness of God.* What was Man produc'd for, but to settle his thoughts upon this? What should have been *Adam's* employment in Innocence, but to read over all the lines of Nature, and fix his Contemplations on that good hand, that drew them? What is Man endued with reason for, above all other Animals, but to take notice of this goodness, spread over all the Creatures, which they themselves though they felt it, could not have such a sense of, as to make answerable returns to their Benefactor? Can we satisfy ourselves, in being Spectators of it, and Enjoyers of it, only in such a manner as the Brutes are? The Beasts behold things, as well as we, they feel the warm beams of this Goodness as well as we, but without any reflection upon the Author of them. Shall Divine Blessings meet with no more from us, but a brutish view, and beholding of them? What is more just, than to spend a thought upon him, who hath enlarg'd his hand in so many Benefits to us? Are we indebted to any, more than we are to him? Why should we send our Souls to visit any thing more than him in his Works? That we are able to meditate on him, is a part of his goodness to us, who hath bestow'd that capacity upon us; and if we will not, 'tis a great part of our ingratitude. Can any thing more delightful enter into us, than that of the kind and gracious disposition of that God, who first brought us out of the Abyss of an unhappy nothing, and hath hitherto spread his Wings over us? Where can we meet with a nobler Object than Divine Goodness? And what nobler work can be practiced by us, than to consider it? What is more sensible in all the Operations of his hands, than his skill as they are consider'd in themselves, and his goodness as they are consider'd in relation to us? 'Tis strange, that we should miss the thoughts of it; that we should look upon  
this

\* Matth. 4. 4.

\* Psal. 73. 25.

\* Gen. 30. 1.



this Earth, and every thing in it, and yet overlook that, which it is most full of, viz. Divine Goodness; \* It runs through the whole web of the World, all is fram'd, and diversify'd by Goodness: 'Tis one intire single Goodness, which appears in various garbs and dresses in every part of the Creation. Can we turn our Eyes inward, and send our Eyes outward, and see nothing of a Divinity in both, worthy of our deepest and seriou'st thoughts? Is there any thing in the World we can behold, but we see his Bounty, since nothing was made, but is one way or other beneficial to us? Can we think of our daily food, but we must have some reflecting thoughts on our great Caterer? Can the sweetness of the Creature to our Palate, obscure the sweetness of the Provider to our Minds? 'Tis strange that we should be regardless of that, wherein every Creature without us, and every sense within us, and about us is a Tutor to instruct us! Is it not reason we should think of the times, wherein we were nothing, and from thence run back, to a never begun Eternity; and view our selves in the thoughts of that Goodness, to be in time brought forth upon this stage, as we are at present? Can we consider but one act of our understandings, but one thought, one blossom, one spark of our Souls mounting upwards, and not reflect upon the goodness of God to us, who in that faculty that sparkles out Rational thoughts, has advanced us to a nobler State, and endued us with a nobler Principle, than all the Creatures we see on Earth, except those of our own Rank and Kind? Can we consider but one foolish thought, one sinful act, and reflect upon the guilt and filth of it, and not behold Goodness in sparing us, and Miracles of Goodness in sending his Son to die for us, for the Expiation of it? This Perfection cannot well be out of our thoughts, or at least it is horrible it should, when it is writ in every line of the Creation, and in a legible Rubrick in Bloody Letters in the Cross of his Son. Let us think with our selves, how often he hath multiplied his Blessings, when we did deserve his Wrath; how he hath sent one unexpected Benefit upon the heel of another, to bring us with a swift pace the tidings of good will to us? How often hath he deliver'd us from a Disease, that had the Arrows of Death in its hand, ready to pierce us? How often hath he turn'd our fears into joys, and our distempers into promoters of our felicity? How often hath he mated a temptation, sent seasonable supplies, in the midst of a sore distress, and prevented many dangers, which we could not be so sensible of, because we were in a great measure ignorant of them? How should we meditate upon his goodness to our Souls, in preventing some Sins, in pardoning others, in darting upon us the knowledge of his Gospel, and of himself in the face of his Son Christ? This seems to stick much upon the Spirit of Paul, since he doth so often sprinkle his *Epistles* with the Titles of the *Grace of God*, *Riches of Grace*, *Unsearchable Riches of God*, *Riches of Glory*, and cannot satisfy himself with the Extolling of it. Certainly we should bear upon our heart, a deep and quick sense of this Perfection; as it was the design of God to manifest it, so it would be acceptable to God, for us to have a sense of it: A dull receiver of his Blessings, is no less nauseous to him, than a dull dispenser of his Alms: He loves a *cheerful giver* \*: He doth himself, what he loves in others; He is cheerful in giving, and he loves we should be serious in thinking of him, and have a right apprehension, and sense of his Goodness. \* 1 Cor. 9. 7.

1. A right sense of his Goodness would dispose us to an ingenuous Worship of God. It would damp our aversness to any act of Religion; What made David so resolute, and ready to *Worship towards his holy Temple*, but the sense of his *loving kindness* \*? This would render him always in our mind, a worthy Object of our Devotion, a Stable Prop of our Confidence. We should then adore him, when we consider him as our God, and our selves as the *People of his Pasture, and the Sheep of his hand* \*: We should send up Prayers with strong faith and feeling, and Praises with great joy and pleasure. The sense of his Goodness would make us love him, and our love to him would quicken our adoration of him; but if we regard not this, we shall have no mind to think of him, no mind to act any thing towards him; We may tremble at his Presence, but not heartily Worship him; We shall rather look upon him as a Tyrant, and think no other affection due to him, than what we reserve for an Oppressor, viz. hatred and ill will. \* Psal. 133. 2. \* Psal. 95. 7.



2. A sense of it will *keep us humble*. A sense of it would effect that, for which it self was intended, *viz.* bring us to a Repentance for our Crimes, and not suffer us to harden our selves against him. When we should deeply consider, how he hath made the *Sun* to shine upon us, and his *Rain* to fall upon the Earth for our support; the one to supple the Earth, and the other to assit the Juyce of it to bring forth Fruits: How would it reflect upon us, our ill requitals, and make us hang down our heads before him in a low posture, pleasing to him, and advantageous to our selves? What would the first charge be upon our selves, but what *Moses* brings in his Expostulation against the *Israelites*; \* *Do I thus requite the Lord?* What is this goodness for me, who am so much below him; for me, who have so much incensed him; for me, who have so much abus'd, what he hath allow'd? It would bring to remembrance the horror of our Crimes, and set us a blushing before him, when we should consider the multitude of his Benefits, and our unworthy behaviour that hath not constrain'd him, even against the inclination of his Goodness, to punish us. How little should we plead for a further liberty in Sin, or palliate our former faults? When we set Divine Goodness in one Column, and our Transgressions in another, and compare together their several *Items*; it would fill us with a deep consciousness of our own guilt, and devest us of any worth of our own in our approaches to him: It would humble us, that we cannot love so obliging a God, as much as he deserves to be loved by us: It would make us humble before Men. Who would be proud of a meer Gift, which he knows he hath not Merited? How ridiculous would that Servant be, that should be proud of a rich Livery, which is a Badge of his Service, not a Token of his Merit, but of his Masters Magnificence and Bounty, which though he wear this day, he may be stript of to morrow, and be turn'd out of his Masters Family?

3. A sense of the Divine Goodness would make us *faithful to him*. The Goodness of God obligeth us to serve him, not to offend him: The freeness of his Goodness should make us more ready, to contribute to the advancement of his Glory. When we consider the Benefits of a Friend proceed out of kindness to us, and not out of self ends and vain applause, it works more upon us, and makes us more careful of the honour of such a Person. 'Tis a pure Bounty God hath manifested in *Creation*, and *Providence*, which could not be for himself, who being Blessed for ever, wanted nothing from us: It was not to draw a profit from us, but to impart an advantage to us, *Our goodness extends not to him* \*. The service of the Benefactor is but a Rational return for Benefits, whence *Nehemiah* aggravates the Sins of the *Jews*, † *They have not served thee in thy great goodness, that thou gavest them*, i. e. which thou didst freely bestow upon them. How should we dare to spend upon our Lusts, that which we possess, if we consider'd by whose liberality we came by it? How should we dare to be unfaithful in the Goods, he hath made us Trustees of? A deep sense of Divine Goodness will enoble the Creature, and make it act for the most glorious, and noble end: It would strike Satans Temptation dead, at a blow: It would pull off the false Mask, and Vizor from what he presents to us, to draw us from the service of our Benefactor. We could not with a sense of this, think him kinder to us, than God hath, and will be, which is the great motive of Men, to joyn hands with him, and turn their backs upon God.

4. A sense of the Divine Goodness, would make us *patient under our Miseries*. A deep sense of this, would make us give God the honour of his Goodness in whatsoever he doth, though the reason of his actions be not apparent to us, nor the event and issue of his proceedings foreseen by us. 'Tis a stated case, that *goodness can never intend ill*, but designs good in all its acts, *to them that love God* \*: Nay, he always designs the best; when he bestows any thing upon his People, he sees it best, they should have it; and when he removes any thing from them, he sees it best, they should lose it. When we have lost a thing, we loved, and refuse to be comforted, a sense of this Perfection, which acts God in all, would keep us from misjudging our sufferings, and measuring the intention of the hand, that sent them, by the sharpness of what we feel. What *Patient* fully perswaded of the affection of the *Physician*, would not value him, though that

which

\* *Deut.* 32. 6.

\* *Psal.* 136. 1.

\* *Neh.* 9. 35.

\* *Rom.* 8. 28.



which is given to purge out the Humours, racks his Bowels? When we lose, what we love, perhaps it was some outward lustre tickled our apprehensions, and we did not see the Viper, we would have harm'd our selves by; but God seeing it, snatcht it from us, and we mutter, as if he had been Cruel, and depriv'd us of the good we imagin'd, when he was kind to us, and freed us from the hurt, we should certainly have felt. We should regard that, which in goodness he takes from us, at no other rate than some gilded Poyson, and lurking Venom; The sufferings of Men though upon high provocations, are often follow'd with rich Mercies, and many times are intended as preparations for greater goodness. When God utters that *Rhetorick* of his Bowels, \* *How shall I give thee up Oh Ephraim, I will not execute the fierceness of my anger!* he intended them Mercy in their Captivity, and would prepare them by it, to walk after the Lord. And it is likely, the Posterity of those *Ten Tribes* were the first that ran to God, upon the publishing the Gospel, in the places where they lived: He doth not take away himself, when he takes away outward Comforts: While he snatcheth away the Rattles we play with, he hath a Breast in himself, for us to suck. The consideration of his Goodness, would dispose us to a compos'd frame of Spirit. If we are sick, 'tis Goodness it is a Disease, and not a Hell. 'Tis Goodness, that it is a Cloud, and not a total Darknes. What if he transfers from us, what we have? He takes no more, than what his Goodness first imparted to us; And never takes so much from his People, as his Goodness leaves them: If he strips them of their lives, he leaves them their Souls, with those faculties he furnisht them with at first, and removes them from those Houses of Clay to a richer Mansion. The time of our Sufferings here, were it the whole Course of our Life, bears not the proportion of a moment, to that endless Eternity wherein he hath design'd to manifest his Goodness to us. The Consideration of Divine Goodness would teach us to draw a Calm, even from Storms, and distil Balsom from Rods: If the Reproofs of the Righteous be an excellent Oyl, \* we should not think the Corrections of a good God, to have a less Vertue. \* *Hof. 11. 8.* \* *Psal. 145. 9.*

5. A sense of the Divine Goodness, would *mount us above the World*. It would damp our appetites after meaner things, we should look upon the World not as a God, but a Gift from God, and never think the Present better than the Donor. We should never lie soaking in muddy Puddles, were we always fill'd with a sense of the richness, and clearness of this Fountain, wherein we might bath our selves: Little petty Particles of good would give us no content, when we were sensible of such an unbounded Ocean. Infinite Goodness rightly apprehended, would dull our desires after other things, and sharpen them with a keener edge, after that which is best of all. How earnestly do we long for the presence of a Friend, of whose good will towards us, we have full experience?

6. It would *check any Motions of Envy*. It would make us joy in the prosperity of good Men, and hinder us from envying the outward felicity of the Wicked. We should not dare with an *evil Eye*, to censure his good Hand \*, \* *Matth. 20. 15.* but approve, of what he thinks fit to do both in the matter of his Liberality, and the Subjects he chooseth for it. Though if the disposal were in our hands, we should not imitate him, as not thinking them Subjects fit for Bounty; Yet since it is in his hands, we be to approve of his actions, and not have an ill will towards him for his Goodness, or towards those he is pleased to make the Subjects of it. Since all his Doles are given, to *invite Man to Repentance* \*, \* *Rom. 2. 4.* to envy them those Goods, God hath bestow'd upon them, is to envy God the Glory of his own Goodness, and them the felicity those things might move them to aspire to. 'Tis to wish God more contracted, and thy Neighbour more miserable; But a deep sense of his Sovereign Goodness, would make us rejoyce in any marks of it upon others, and move us to bless him, instead of censuring him.

7. It would *make us thankful*. What can be the most proper, the most natural Reflection, when we behold the most magnificent Characters, he hath imprinted upon our Souls; the conveniency of the Members, he hath compacted in our Bodies, but a Praise of him? Such Motion had *David* upon the first Consideration, \* *I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* \* *Psal. 139.*

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What could be the most natural Reflection, when we behold the rich Prerogatives of our Natures above other Creatures, the provision he hath made for us, for our delight in the beauties of Heaven, for our support in the Creatures on Earth? What can reasonably be expected from uncorrupted Man, to be the first motion of his Soul, but an extolling the bountiful hand of the invisible Donor, who ever he be? This would make us venture at some endeavours of a grateful acknowledgment, though we should despair of rendring any thing proportionable to the greatness of the Benefit; and such an acknowledgment of our own weakness, would be an acceptable part of our gratitude; Without a due and deep sense of Divine Goodness, our praise of it, and thankfulness for it, will be but cold, formal, and customary, our Tongues may bless him, and our Heart slight him. And this will lead us to the third Exhortation.

3. Which is that of *thankfulness for Divine Goodness*. The absolute Goodness of God, as it is the Excellency of his Nature, is the Object of Praise: The Relative Goodness of God, as he is our Benefactor, is the Object of Thankfulness; This was always a Debt due from Man to God, he had Obligations in the time of his Integrity, and was then to render it; he is not less, but more oblig'd to it in the State of Corruption; The Benefits being the greater, by how much the more unworthy he is of them by reason of his Revolt. The Bounty bestow'd upon an Enemy that merits the contrary, ought to be received with a greater Relentment, than that bestow'd on a Friend, who is not unworthy of Testimonies of Respect. Gratitude to God is the Duty of every Creature, that hath a sense of it self. The more Excellent Being any enjoy, the more devout ought to be the acknowledgment. How often doth David stir up, not only himself, but summon all Creatures, even the *insensible ones* to joyn in the Comfort? \* He calls to the *Deepes, Fire, Hail, Snow, Mountains, and Hills*, to bear a part in this work of Praise; Not that they are able to do it actively, but to shew that Man is to call in the whole Creation to assist him passively, and should have so much Charity to all Creatures, as to receive what they offer, and so much affection to God as to present to him, what he receives from him. Snow and Hail cannot bless and praise God, but Man ought to praise God for those things, wherein there is a mixture of trouble and inconvenience, something to molest our sense, as well as something that improves the Earth for Fruit. This God requires of us, for this, he instituted several Offerings, and requir'd a little Portion of Fruits, to be presented to him, as an acknowledgment they held the whole from his Bounty. And the end of the Festival Days among the *Jews*, was to revive the memory of those signal acts, wherein his Power for them, and his Goodness to them, had been extraordinarily evident. 'Tis no more but our Mouths to Praise him, and our Hand to Obey him, that he exacts at our hands. He commands us not to expend, what he allows us, in the Erecting stately Temples to his Honour; all the Coyn he requires to be paid with for his Expence, is the *offering of Thanksgiving*\*: And this we ought to do, as much as we can, since we cannot do it, as much as he Merits, for *who can shew forth all his praise*†? If we have the Fruit of his Goodness, 'tis fit he should have the *Fruit of our Lips*\*. The least Kindness should inflame our Souls with a kindly Relentment: Though some of his Benefits have a brighter, some a darker aspect towards us, yet they all come from this common Spring; His Goodness shines in all; there are the footsteps of Goodness in the least, as well as the smiles of Goodness in the greatest; the meanest therefore is not to pass without a regard of the Author. As the Glory of God is more illustrious in some Creatures than in others, yet it glitters in all, and the lowest as well as the highest administers matter of Praise. But they are not only little things, but the choicer favours he hath bestow'd upon us. How much doth it deserve our acknowledgment, that he should contrive our Recovery, when we had plotted our Ruine? That when he did from Eternity behold the Crimes, wherewith we would incense him, he should not according to the Rights of Justice, cast us into Hell, but prize us at the Rate of the Blood and Life of his only Son, in value above the Blood of Men and Lives of Angels. How should we bless that God, that we have yet a Gospel among us, that we  
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\* Psal. 145.

\* Psal. 50. 14.

† Psal. 136. 2.

Heb. 13. 15.



are not driven into the utmost Regions, that we can attend upon him in the face of the Sun, and not forced to the secret obscurities of the Night? Whatsoever we enjoy, whatsoever we receive, we must own him as the Donor, and read his Hand in it. Rob him not of any Praise, to give to an Instrument. No Man hath wherewithal to do us good, nor a heart to do us good, nor opportunities of benefiting us, without him. When the *Cripple* received the soundness of his Limbs from *Peter*, he praised the Hand, that sent it, not the Hand that brought it: \* He praised God. When we want anything that is good, let the goodness of Divine Nature move us to *David's* practice, to *thirst after God* \*: And when we feel the motions of his Goodness to us, let us imitate the Temper of the same Holy Man; \* *Bless the Lord O my Soul, and forget not all his benefits.* 'Tis an unworthy Carriage, to deal with him, as a Traveller doth with a Fountain, kneel down to drink of it, when he is thirsty, and turn his back upon it, and perhaps never think of it more, after he is satisfied.

\* AGS. 2. 6.  
Verse 8.

\* PS. 42. 1.  
\* PS. 103. 1.

4. And Lastly, *Imitate this Goodness of God.* If his Goodness hath such an influence upon us, as to make us love him, it will also move us with an ardent Zeal, to imitate him in it. Christ makes this use from the Doctrine of Divine Goodness, \* *Do good to them that hate you, that you may be the Children of your Father, which is in Heaven, for he makes his Sun to rise on the evil and on the good.* As Holiness is a Resemblance of Gods Purity, so Charity is a Resemblance of Gods Goodness: And this our Saviour calls Perfection; *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven, is perfect.* As God would not be a perfect God without Goodness, so neither can any be a perfect Christian without Kindness; Charity and Love being the splendour and loveliness of all Christian Graces, as Goodness is the splendour and loveliness of all Divine Attributes. This, and Holiness are order'd in the *Scripture* to be the grand Patterns of our imitation: Imitate the Goodness of God in two things.

\* Matth. 5.  
44. 45.

Verse 48.

1. *In relieving, and assisting others in distress.* Let our heart be as large in the capacity of Creatures, as God's is in the capacity of a Creator. A large heart from him to us, and a strait heart from us to others, will not suit: Let us not think any so far below us, as to be unworthy of our Care, since God thinks none, that are infinitely distant from him, too mean for his. His infinite Glory mounts him above the Creature, but his infinite Goodness stoops him to the meanest Works of his hands. As he lets not the Transgressions of Prosperity, pass without punishment, so he lets not the distress of his Afflicted People, pass him without support. Shall God provide for the case of Beasts, and shall not we have some tenderness towards those, that are of the same Blood with our selves, and have as good Blood to boast of, as runs in the Veins of the mightiest *Monarch* on Earth; and as mean, and as little as they are, can lay claim to as ancient a Pedigree, as the stateliest Prince in the World, who cannot ascend to Ancestors beyond *Adam*? Shall we glut our selves with Divine Beneficence to us, and wear his Livery only on our own backs, forgetting the Afflictions of some dear *Joseph*; when God who hath an unblemish'd felicity in his own Nature, looks out of himself, to view, and relieve the miseries of poor Creatures? Why hath God increased the Doles of his Treasures to some more than others? Was it merely for themselves, or rather that they might have a bottom, to attain the honour of imitating him? Shall we embezzel his Goods to our own use, as if we were absolute Proprietors, and not Stewards entrusted for others? Shall we make a difficulty, to part with something to others, out of that abundance he hath bestow'd upon any of us? Did not his Goodness strip his Son of the Glory of Heaven for a time to enrich us? and shall we shrug when we are to part with a little, to pleasure him? 'Tis not very becoming for any to be backward, in supplying the necessities of others with a few morsels, who have had the happiness, to have had their greatest necessities supplied with his Sons Blood. He demands not, that we should strip our selves of all for others, but of a pittance, something of superfluity, which will turn more to our account, than what is vainly and unpro-



unprofitably consumed on our Backs and Bellies. If he hath given much to any of us, 'tis rather to lay aside part of the Income for his Service ; Else we would Monopolize Divine Goodness to our selves, and seem to distrust under our present Experiments, his future Kindness, as though the last thing he gave us, was attended with this language, Hoard up this, and expect no more from me ; Use it only to the glutting your Avarice, and feeding your Ambition ; which would be against the whole scope of Divine Goodness. If we do not endeavour, to write after the Comely Copy, he hath set us, we may provoke him, to harden himself against us, and in wrath bestow that on the Fire, or on our Enemies, which his Goodness hath imparted to us for his Glory, and the supplying the necessities of poor Creatures. And on the contrary he is so delighted with this kind of imitation of him, that a Cup of cold Water, when there is no more to be done, shall not be unrewarded.

2. Imitate God in his Goodness, *in a kindness to our worst Enemies.* The best Man is more unworthy to receive any thing from God, than the worst can be to receive from us. How kind is God, to those that blaspheme him, and gives them the same Sun, and the same Showers, that he doth to the best Men in the World ? Is it not more our glory to imitate God, in *doing good to those that hate us*, than to imitate the Men of the World in requiting evil, by a return of a sevenfold mischief ? This would be a goodness which would vanquish the hearts of Men, and render us greater than *Alexanders*, and *Cæsars*, who did only triumph over miserable Carcasses ; Yea, it is to triumph over our selves, in being good against the sentiments of Corrupt Nature. Revenge makes us Slaves to our Passions, as much as the Offenders, and good Returns render us Victorious over our Adversaries ; \* *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* When we took up our Arms against God, his Goodness contrived not our Ruine, but our Recovery. This is such a Goodness of God, as could not be discover'd in an Innocent State ; While Man had continued in his Duty, he could not have been guilty of an Enmity ; And God could not but affect him, unless he had denied himself : So this of being good to our Enemies, could never have been practis'd in a State of Rectitude ; since where was a perfect Innocence, there could be no spark of Enmity to one another. It can be no disparagement to any Mans Dignity, to cast his influences on his greatest Opposers, since God who acts for his own Glory, thinks not himself disparag'd, by sending forth the Streams of his Bounty on the wickedest Persons, who are far meaner to him than those of the same Blood can be to us. Who hath the worse thoughts of the Sun, for shining upon the Earth, that sends up Vapours to Cloud it ? It can be no disgrace to resemble God ; if his Hand and Bowels be open to us ; let not ours be shut to any.

\* Rom. 12. 21.



A  
DISCOURSE  
UPON  
GODS Dominion.

P S A L M. CIII. Verse 19.

*The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens : And his Kingdom Ruleth over all.*

**T**HE Psalm begins with the praise of God, wherein the *Pennman* excites his soul to a right and elevated management of so great a duty. Ver. 1. *'Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless his Holy Name :* And because himself and all men were insufficient, to offer up a praise to God, answerable to the greatness of his benefits, he summons in the end of the Psalm the *Angels*, and all *Creatures*, to joyn in consort with him.

Observe.

1. *As man is too shallow a Creature to comprehend the excellency of God, so he is too dull, and scanty a Creature to offer up a due praise to God,* both in regard of the excellency of his nature, and the multitude and greatness of his benefits.

2. *We are apt to forget divine benefits, our Souls must therefore be often jogg'd, and rous'd up. All that is within me,* every power of my Rational, and every Affection of my Sensitive part. All his Faculties, all his Thoughts. Our Souls will hang back from God in every duty, much more in this; if we lay not a strict charge upon them. We are so void of a pure and intire love to God, that we have no mind to those duties. Wants will spurr us on to Prayer, but a pure love to God can only spirit us to Praise. We are more ready to reach out a hand, to receive his Mercies, than to lift up our heart to recognize them after the receipt.

After the *Psalmist* had summoned his own Soul to this task, he enumerates the Divine blessings received by him, to awaken his soul by a sense of them to so noble a work. He begins at the first and foundation Mercy to himself, the pardon of his sin, and justification of his Person, the renewing of his sickly and languishing nature. Verse 3. *Who forgives all thy iniquities, and heals all thy diseases.* His Redemption from death or Eternal destruction; his expected glorification thereupon, which he speaks of with that certainty as if it were present. V. 4. *Who redeems thy life from destruction, who Crowns thee with loving kindness and tender Mercies.* He makes his progress to the mercy manifested to the Church in the protection of it against, or delivery of it from oppressions. Verse 6. *The Lord executeth Righteousness and Judgment, for all that are oppressed.* In the discovery of

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his Will and Law, and the glory of his merciful Name to it. Verse 7, 8. *He made known his ways unto Moses, and his acts unto the Children of Israel. The Lord is Merciful and Gracious, slow to Anger, and plenteous in Mercy.* Which latter words may refer also to the free and unmerited spring of the benefits he had reckoned up. *Viz.* The Mercy of God, which he mentions also verse 10. *He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities;* And then extols the perfection of Divine mercy, in the pardoning of sin. Ver. 11, 12. The Paternal tenderness of God. Verse 13. The eternity of his Mercy. Verse 17. But restrains it to the proper object. Verse 11. 17. *To them that fear him* i. e. To them that believe in him: *Fear* being the word commonly used for *Faith* in the Old Testament under the legal dispensation, wherein the spirit of bondage was more eminent than the spirit of Adoption, and their fear more than their confidence.

Observe.

1. *All true blessings grow up from the pardon of sin.* ver. 2. *Who forgives all thine iniquities.* That is the first blessing, the top and Crown of all other favours, which draws all other blessings after it; and sweetens all other blessings with it. The principal intent of Christ was Expiation of sin, Redemption from iniquity; the purchase of other blessings was consequent upon it. Pardon of sin is every blessing virtually, and in the root and spring, it flows from the favor of God, and is such a gift as cannot be tainted with a Curse, as outward things may.

2. *Where sin is pardoned, the soul is renewed,* verse 3. *Who heals all thy diseases.* Where guilt is remitted, the deformity and sickness of the soul is cur'd. Forgiveness is a teeming mercy, it never goes single; when we have an interest in Christ, as bearing the chastisement of our peace, we receive also a balsom from his blood, to heal the wounds we feel in our nature. Isaiah 53. 5. *The chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.* As there is a guilt in sin, which binds us over to punishment, so there is a contagion in sin, which fills us with pestilent diseases, when the one is removed, the other is cur'd. We should not know how to love the one without the other. The renewing the soul is necessary for a delightful relish of the other blessings of God. A condemn'd Malefactor infected with a Leprosie, or any other loathsome distemper, if pardon'd, could take little comfort in his freedom from the Gibbet without a Cure of his Plague.

3. *God is the sole and sovereign author of all spiritual blessings. Who forgives all thy iniquities, and heals all thy diseases.* He refers all to God, nothing to himself in his own merit and strength. *All,* not the pardon of one sin merited by me, not the cure of one disease can I owe to my own power, and the strength of my free will, and the operations of nature. He, and he alone is the Prince of pardon, the Physitian that restores me, the Redeemer that delivers me; 'tis a Sacrilege, to divide the praise between God and our selves. God only can knock off our fetters, expell our distempers, and restore a deformed Soul to its decayed beauty.

4. *Gracious Souls will bless God as much for Sanctification as for Justification.* The initials of Sanctification (and there are no more in this Life) are worthy of solemn acknowledgement. 'Tis a sign of growth in Grace when our Hymns are made up of acknowledgments of Gods sanctifying, as well as pardoning Grace. In blessing God for the one, we rather shew a love to our selves, in blessing God for the other, we cast out a pure beam of love to God: because by purifying Grace we are fitted to the service of our maker, prepared to every good work which is delightful to him; by the other, we are eas'd in our selves. Pardon fills us with inward peace, but Sanctification fills us with an activity for God. Nothing is so capable of setting the soul in a heavenly tune, as the consideration of God as a pardoner, and as a healer.

5. *Where sin is pardon'd, the punishment is remitted.* Verse 3, 4. *Who forgives all thy iniquities, and Redeems thy Life from destruction.* A Malefactor's pardon puts an end to his chains, frees him from the stench of the Dungeon, and fear of the



the Gibbet. Pardon is nothing else but the remitting of guilt, and guilt is nothing else but an obligation to punishment as a penal debt for sin. A Creditors tearing a Bond frees the Debtor from payment, and rigor.

6. *Growth in Grace is always annexed to true Sanctification.* Verse 3. So that *thy youth is renew'd like the Eagles.* Interpreters trouble themselves much about the manner of the Eagles renewing its youth, and regaining its vigor: \* He speaks best, that saith, the *Psalmist* speaks only according to the opinion of the vulgar, and his design was not to write a Natural History. Growth always accompanies Grace, as well as it doth Nature in the Body; not that it is without its qualms, & languishing fits as Children are not, but still their distempers make them grow; Grace is not an idle, but an active principle. 'Tis not like, the *Psalmist* means it of the strength of the Body, or the prosperity and stability of his Government, but the vigor of his Grace and Comfort, since they are spiritual blessings here, that are the matter of his song. The healing the Disease conduceth to the sprouting up, and flourishing of the Body. 'Tis the Nature of Grace to go from strength to strength.

7. *When sin is pardoned, 'tis perfectly pardon'd.* Verse 11, 12. *As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.* The East and West are the greatest distance in the World, the terms can never meet together. When sin is pardoned, it is never charged again; the guilt of it can no more return, than East can become West, or West become East.

8. *Obedience is necessary to an interest in the mercy of God.* Verse 17. *The mercy of the Lord is to them that fear him, to them that remember his Commandments, to do them.* Commands are to be remembered in order to practice, a vain speculation is not the intent of the publication of them.

After the *Psalmist* had enumerated the benefits of God, he reflects upon the greatness of God, and considers him on his Throne, encompassed with the Angels, the Ministers of his Providence. Verse 19. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom Rules over all.* He brings in this of his Dominion, just after he had largely treated of his mercy. Either,

1. To signify, That God is not only to be praised for his mercy, but for his Majesty, both for the height and extent of his Authority.

2. To extoll the greatness of his mercy and clemency. What I have said now, Oh my Soul, of the mercy of God, and his paternal pity, is commended by his Majesty; his Grandeur hinders not his Clemency: Though his Throne be High, his Bowels are Tender. He looks down upon his meanest Servants from the height of his Glory. Since his Majesty is Infinite, his Mercy must be as great as his Majesty. It must be a greater pity lodging in his Breast, than what is in any Creature, since it is not damp'd by the greatness of his Sovereignty.

3. To render his Mercy more Comfortable. The Mercy I have spoken of, Oh my Soul, is not the Mercy of a Subject, but of a Sovereign. An Executioner may torture a criminal, and strip him of his Life, and a vulgar pity cannot relieve him, but the Clemency of the Prince can perfectly pardon him. 'Tis that God who hath none above him to controul him, none below him to resist him, that hath performed all the acts of Grace to thee. If God by his supreme Authority pardons us, who can reverse it? If all the Subjects of God in the World should pardon us, and God withhold his grant, what will it profit us? Take comfort, Oh my Soul, since God from his Throne in the highest, and that God, who rules over every particular of the Creation, hath granted and sealed thy pardon to thee. What would his Grace signify, if he were not a Monarch, extending his Royal Empire over every thing, and swaying all by his Scepter?

4ly. To render the *Psalmist's* confidence more firm in any pressures. Verse 15, 16. He had considered the misery of man in the shortness of his Life; his place should know him no more, he should never return to his Authority, Employments, Opportunities, that death would take from him; but howsoever the Mercy and Majesty of God were the ground of his confidence. He draws himself from poring



upon any Calamities, which may assault him, to heaven the place where God orders all things, that are done on the Earth. He is able to protect us from our dangers, and to deliver us from our distresses; whatsoever miseries thou mayst lie under, Oh my Soul, cast thy Eye up to Heaven, and see a pitying God in a Majestick Authority. A God who can perform what he hath promised to them that fear him; since he hath a Throne above the Heavens, and bears sway over all, that envy thy happiness, and would stain thy felicity. A God whose Authority cannot be curtailed and dismembered by any. When the *Prophet* solicites the *sounding* of the Divine Bowels, he urgeth him by his *dwelling in Heaven*, the habitation of his Holiness. *Isaiah 63. 15. His Kingdom ruleth over all*: There is none therefore hath any Authority to make him break his Covenant or violate his promise.

5. *As an incentive to Obedience*, The Lord is merciful, saith he to them, that *Remember his Commandments to do them*, verse 17, 18. And then brings in the *Text* as an encouragement to observe his *Precepts*; he hath a Majesty, that deserves it from us, and an Authority to protect us in it; if a King in a small spot of Earth is to be Obeyed by his Subjects, how much more is God, who is more Majestick than all the Angels in Heaven, and Monarchs on Earth? who hath a majesty to exact our Obedience, and a Mercy to allure it! We should not set upon the performance of any Duty, without an Eye lifted up to God as a great King. It would make us willing to serve him; the more Noble the Person, the more Honourable and Powerful the Prince, the more glorious is his Service. A view of God upon his Throne, will makes us think his Service our Priviledge, his Precepts our Ornaments, and Obedience to him the greatest Honour and Nobility. It will make us weighty, and serious in our performances. It would stake us down to any duty. The reason we are so loose, and unmannerly in the carriage of our Souls before God, is because we consider him not as a *great King*. *Malachy 1. 14. Our Father which art in Heaven* in regard of his Majesty, is the Preface to Prayer.

Let us now consider the words in themselves. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom rules over all.*

*The Lord hath prepared*] The word signifies *Establisht*, as well as *prepared*, and might so be rendered. Due preparation is a natural way, to the *Establishment* of a thing. Hasty resolves break and moulder. This notes,

1. *The infiniteness of his Authority*. He prepares it, none else for him. 'Tis a Dominion that originally resides in his Nature, not deriv'd from any by birth, or commission, he alone prepar'd it. He is the sole cause of his own Kingdom; his Authority therefore is unbounded, as infinite as his Nature: None can set Laws to him, because none but himself prepared his Throne for him. As he will not impair his own Happiness, so he will not abridge himself of his own Authority.

2. *Readiness to exercise it upon due occasions*. He hath prepared his Throne, he is not at a loss, he needs not stay for a Commission or Instructions from any, how to act. He hath all things ready for the assistance of his People, he hath Rewards, and Punishments; his Treasures, and Axes the great marks of Authority lying by him, the one for the good, the other for the wicked. His *Mercy he keeps by him for Thousands*, *Exod. 34. 7. His Arrows* he hath prepared by him for Rebels. *Psal. 7. 13.*

3. *Wise management of it*; 'Tis prepared; preparations imply prudence; the Government of God is not a rash and heady Authority. A Prince upon his Throne, a Judge upon the Bench manages things with the greatest discretion, or should be supposed so to do.

4. *Successfulness and duration of it*. He hath prepared, or Established. 'Tis fixed, not tottering, 'tis an immoveable Dominion, all the strugglings of Men and Devils cannot overturn it, nor so much as shake it. 'Tis Established above the reach of obstinate Rebels; he cannot be deposed from it, he cannot be mated in it. His Dominion,



nion, as himself, abides for ever. And as his Counsel so his Authority shall stand, and *he will do all his pleasure.* *Isaiah 46. 10.*

*His Throne in the Heavens*] This is an expression to signify the Authority of God, for as God hath no member properly, though he be so represented to us, so he hath properly no Throne. It signifies his power of Reigning, and Judging. A Throne is proper to Royalty, the Seat of Majesty in its excellency, and the place where the deepest respect and homage of Subjects is paid, and their Petitions presented. That the Throne of God is in the Heavens, that there he sits as a Sovereign, is the opinion of all that acknowledge a God; when they stand in need of his Authority to assist them, their eyes are lifted up, and their heads stretched out to Heaven; so his Son Christ prayed, *he lifted up his Eyes to Heaven*, as the place where his Father sat in Majesty, as the most adorable object. *John 17. 1.* Heaven hath the Title of his *Throne*, as the Earth hath that of his *Footstool.* *Isaiah 66. 1.* And therefore Heaven is sometimes put for the Authority of God. *Dan. 4. 26.* *After that thou shalt have known, that the Heavens do rule, i. e.* That God who hath his Throne in the Heavens, orders earthly Princes and Scepters as he pleases, and rules over the Kingdoms of the World.

His Throne in the Heavens, Notes,

1. *The Glory of his Dominion*, The Heavens are the most stately and comely peices of the Creation. His Majesty is there most visible, his glory most splendid. *Psal. 19. 1.* The Heavens speak out with a full mouth his Glory. 'Tis therefore called *the Habitation of his Holiness and of his Glory, Isaiah 63. 15.* There is the greater glister and brightness of his Glory. The whole Earth indeed is full of his Glory, full of the beams of it, the Heaven is full of the body of it; as the rayes of the Sun reach the Earth, but the full Glory of it is in the Firmament. In Heaven his Dominion is more acknowledged by the Angels, standing at his beck, and by their readiness, and swiftness obeying his Commands, going and returning as a flash of lightning. *Ezek. 1. 14.* His Throne may well be said to be in the Heavens, since his Dominion is not disputed there by the Angels that attend him, as it is on Earth by the Rebels that arm themselves against him.

2. *The Supremacy of his Empire*, The Heavens are the loftiest part of the Creation and the only fit Palace for him; 'tis in the Heavens his Majesty and Dignity are so sublime, that they are elevated above all Earthly Empires.

3. *Peculiarly of this Dominion*. He rules in the Heavens alone. There is some shadow of Empire in the World. Royalty is communicated to men as his Substitutes. He hath disposed a vicarious Dominion to men in his footstool the Earth, he gives them some share in his Authority; and therefore the Title of his Name. *Psal. 82. 6.* *I have said ye are Gods; but in Heaven he reigns alone* without any Substitutes; his Throne is there: He gives out his orders to the Angels himself, the marks of his Immediate soveraignty are there most visible. He hath no Vicars General of that Empire. His Authority is not delegated to any Creature, he rules the blessed Spirits by himself; but he rules Men that are on his Footstool by others of the same kind, men of their own nature.

4. *The vastness of his Empire*. The Earth is but a spot to the Heavens; What is *England* in a Mapp to the whole Earth, but a spot, you may cover with your Finger? Much less must the whole Earth be to the extended Heavens; 'Tis but a little point or Atome to what is visible; the Sun is vastly bigger than it, and several Stars are supposed to be of a greater bulk than the Earth; and how many and what Heavens are beyond, the ignorance of man cannot understand. If the *Throne of God* be there 'tis a larger Circuit he rules in, than can well be conceived. You cannot conceive the many millions of little particles there are in the Earth, and if all put together be but as one point to that place where the Throne of God is seated, how vast must his Empire be? He rules there over the Angels, which *excell in strength*, those *Hosts of his which do his pleasure*, in comparison of whom all the Men in the World, and the power of the greatest Potentates is no more



more than the strength of an *Ant* or *Fly*; multitudes of them encircle his Throne, and listen to his orders without roving, and execute them without disputing. And since his Throne is in the Heavens, it will follow, that all things under the Heaven are parts of his Dominion; his Throne being in the highest place, the inferior things of Earth cannot but be subject to him; and it necessarily includes his influence on all things below: because the Heavens are the cause of all the motion in the World, the immediate thing the Earth doth naturally address to for Corn, Wine, and Oyl, above which there is no superior but the Lord. *Hosea 2. 21, 22. The Earth bears the Corn, Wine, and Oyl; the Heavens bear the Earth, and the Lord bears the Heavens.*

5. *The easiness of managing this Government.* His Throne being placed on high he cannot but behold all things, that are done below; the height of a place, gives advantage to a pure and clear Eye to behold things below it. Had the Sun an Eye, nothing could be done in the open Air out of its ken. The Throne of God being in Heaven, he easily looks from thence upon all the Children of Men. *Psal. 14. 2. The Lord looked down from Heaven upon the Children of Men, to see if there were any, that did understand.* He looks not down from Heaven, as if he were in regard of his presence confined there, but he looks down majestically and by way of Authority, not as the look of a bare Spectator, but the look of a Governor, to pass a sentence upon them as a Judge. His being in the Heavens renders him capable of doing *whatsoever he pleases.* *Psal. 115. 3.* His Throne being there, he can by a word in stopping the Motions of the Heavens turn the whole Earth into confusion. In this respect it is said, *he rides upon the Heaven in thy help, Deut. 33. 26.* Discharges his Thunders upon men, and makes the influences of it, serve his peoples interest. By one turn of a cock, as you see in Grottoes, he can cause streams from several parts of the Heavens to refresh, or ruine the World.

6. *Duration of it.* The Heavens are incorruptible, his Throne is placed there in an incorruptible state. Earthly Empires have their decays and dissolutions. The Throne of God outlives the dissolution of the World.

*His Kingdom rules over all.* He hath an absolute right over all things within the Circuit of Heaven and Earth; though his Throne be in Heaven, as the place where his Glory is most eminent and visible, his Authority most exactly obey'd, yet his Kingdom extends its self to the lower parts of the Earth. He doth not muffle, and cloud up himself in Heaven, or confine his Sovereignty to that place, his Royal power extends to all visible, as well as invisible things: He is proprietor and possessor of all. *Deut. 10. 14. The Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens is the Lords thy God, the Earth also with all that is there.* He hath right to dispose of all as he pleases. He doth not say his Kingdom Rules all that fear him, but *over all*, so that it is not the Kingdom of *Grace* he here speaks of, but his *natural* and universal Kingdom. Over Angels, and Men; Jews, and Gentiles; Animate, and Inanimate things.

The *Psalmist* considers God here as a great Monarch and General, and all Creatures as his Hósts, and Regiments under him, and takes notice principally of two things.

1. *The Establishment of his Throne together with the Seat of it.* [He hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens.]

2. *The extent of his Empire.* [His Kingdom rules over all.]

This Text in all the parts of it is a fit basis for a discourse upon the *Dominion of God*, and the observation will be this.

*Doctrine. God is Sovereign Lord and King, and exerciseth a Dominion over the whole World both Heaven and Earth.*

This is so clear, that nothing is more spoken of in *Scripture*. The very name *Lord* imports it, a name originally belonging to Gods, and from them translated to others.



others. And he is frequently called the *Lord of Hosts*, because all the Troops and Armies of Spiritual and Corporeal Creatures are in his hands, and at his service. This is one of his principal Titles. And the Angels are called his Hosts, 21. ver. following the Text; his Camp and Militia. But more plainly, 1 Kings 22. 19. God is presented upon his *Throne*, encompassed with all the *Host of Heaven* standing on his *Right* hand, and on his *Left*, which can be understood of no other than of the *Angels*, that wait for the Commands of their Sovereign, and stand about, not to Counsel him, but to receive his Orders. The *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Starrs* are called his *Hosts*, Deut. 4. 19. Appointed by him for the Government of inferior things. He hath an absolute Authority over the greatest, and the least Creatures; over those that are most dreadful, and those that are most beneficial; over the good Angels that willingly obey him, over the *Evil* Angels that seem most incapable of Government. And as he is thus Lord of Hosts, he is the *King of Glory*, or a glorious King. Psal. 24. 10. You find him called a *great King*; the *most High*. Psal. 92. 1. The supreme Monarch, there being no dignity in Heaven or Earth, but what is dimm before him, and infinitely inferior to him; yea he hath the Title of *Only King*. 1 Tim. 6. 15. The Title of Royalty truly and properly only belongs to him. You may see it described very magnificently by David, at the freewill offering for the Building of the Temple. 1 Chron. 29. 11, 12. *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majesty, thine is the Kingdom, O God, and thou art exalted as Head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou Reignest over all, and in thy hand is Power and Might, and in thy hand it is to make Great, and to give strength to all.* He hath an eminency of Power or Authority above all. All Earthly Princes received their Diadems from him, yea even those that will not acknowledge him, and he hath a more absolute power over them, than they can challenge over their meanest Vassals. As God hath a knowledge infinitely above our knowledge; so he hath a Dominion incomprehensibly above any Dominion of Man, and by all the shadows drawn from the Authority of one man over another; we can have but weak glimmerings of the Authority and Dominion of God.

*There is a threefold Dominion of God.*

1. *Natural*, which is absolute over all Creatures, and is founded in the *Nature* of God as Creator.
2. *Spiritual* or *Gracious*, which is a Dominion over his Church as Redeemed, and founded in the *Covenant* of Grace.
3. *A Glorious Kingdom* at the winding up of all, wherein he shall Reign over all, either in the *Glory* of his Mercy, as over the glorified Saints; or in the *Glory* of his Justice in the condemned Devils, and Men. The first Dominion is founded in *Nature*. The second in *Grace*. The third in regard of the blessed, in *Grace*; in regard of the damn'd, in demerit in them, and *Justice* in him.

He is Lord of all things, and always in regard of propriety Psal. 24. 1. *The Earth is the Lords and the fulness thereof, the World and all that dwell therein.* The Earth with the Riches and Treasures in the Bowels of it; the habitable World with every thing that moves upon it, are his; he hath the sole right, and what right soever any others have, is deriv'd from him. In regard also of possession, Gen. 14. 22. *The most high God, possessor of Heaven and Earth.* In respect of whom, Man is not the proprietary nor possessor, but usufructuary at the Will of this Grand Lord.

In the prosecution of this,

- I. *I shall lay down Some general propositions for the clearing and confirming it.*
- II. *I shall shew Wherein this right of Dominion is founded.*
- III. *What the nature of it is.*
- IV. *Wherein it consists; and how 'tis manifested.*

I. Some



I. Some general Propositions for the clearing and confirming of it.

1. *We must know the difference between the Might or Power of God, and his Authority.* We commonly mean by the *Power* of God the strength of God, whereby he is able to effect all his purposes. By the *Authority* of God, we mean the right he hath to act what he pleases. Omnipotence is his *Physical power*, whereby he is able to do what he will. Dominion is his *moral Power*, whereby it is lawful for him to do what he will. Among men, Strength and Authority are two distinct things. A Subject may be a *Giant*, and be stronger than his Prince, but he hath not the same Authority as his Prince. Worldly Dominion may be seated not in a brawny Arm, but a sickly and infirm Body. As knowledge and wisdom are distinguish'd; knowledge respects the matter, being, and nature of a thing. Wisdom respects the harmony, order, and actual usefulness of a thing. Knowledge searcheth the nature of a thing, and Wisdom employs that thing to its proper use. A man may have much Knowledge, and little Wisdom, so a man may have much Strength, and little or no Authority. A greater strength may be settled in the Servant, but a greater Authority resides in the Master; strength is the natural vigor of a Man. God hath an infinite strength, he hath a strength to bring to pass whatsoever he decrees; he acts without fainting and weakness, *Isaiah* 40. 28. and impairs not his strength by the exercise of it. As God is *Lord* he hath a right to *Enact*; as he is Almighty, he hath a power to *Execute*. His strength is the executive power belonging to his Dominion: In regard of his Sovereignty he hath a right to Command all Creatures. In regard of his Almightyness he hath power to make his Commands be obey'd; or to punish men for the violation of them. His power is that whereby he subdues all Creatures under him, his Dominion is that, whereby he hath a right to subdue all Creatures under him.

This Dominion is a right of making what he pleases, of possessing what he made, of disposing of what he doth possess; whereas his power is an ability, to make, what he hath a right to Create, to hold what he doth possess, and to execute the manner, wherein he resolves to dispose of his Creatures.

2. *All the other Attributes of God referre to this perfection of Dominion.* They all bespeak him fit for it, and are discovered in the exercise of it, (which hath been manifested in the discourses of those Attributes, we have passed through hitherto.) His Goodness fits him for it, because he can never use his Authority but for the good of the Creatures, and conducting them to their true end. His Wisdom can never be mistaken in the exercise of it; his power can accomplish the Decrees, that flow from his absolute Authority. What can be more rightful, than the placing Authority in such an infinite Goodness, that hath Bowels to pity, as well as a Scepter to sway his Subjects? That hath a mind to contrive, and a will to regulate his contrivances for his own Glory, and his Creatures good; and an arm of power to bring to pass, what he Orders. Without this Dominion some perfections, as Justice, and Mercy, would lie in obscurity, and much of his Wisdom would be shrouded from our sight and knowledge.

3. *This of Dominion, as well as that of Power, hath been acknowledged by all.* The High Priest was to wave the Offering, or shake it to and fro. *Exod.* 29. 24. which the Jews say, was customarily from East to West, and from North to South, the four quarters of the World, to signify Gods Sovereignty over all the parts of the World. And some of the Heathens in their Adorations turned their Bodies to all quarters, to signify the extensive Dominion of God throughout the whole Earth. That Dominion did of right pertain to the Deity, was confest by the Heathen in the name *Baal*, given to their Idols, which signifies *Lord*; and was not a name of one Idol, adored for a God, but common to all the Eastern Idols. God hath interwoven the notion of his Sovereignty in the Nature and Constitution of Man, in the noblest and most inward acts of his Soul, in that faculty or act which is most necessary for him, in his converse in this World either with God or Man. 'Tis stamp'd upon the Conscience of Man, and flashes in his face in every act of self Judgment Conscience passes upon a Man. Every reflection

of



of Conscience implies an obligation of man to some Law *written in his Heart*. *Rom. 2. 15.* This Law cannot be without a Legillator, nor this Legillator without a Sovereign Dominion; these are but natural, and easie consequences in the mind of Man from every act of Conscience. The indelible Authority of Conscience in Man, in the whole exercise of it, bears a respect to the Sovereignty of God, clearly proclaims not only a supream being, but a supream Governor, and points man directly to it, that a man may as soon deny his having such a reflecting principle within him, as deny Gods Dominion over him, and consequently over the whole World of rational Creatures.

4. *This notion of Sovereignty is inseparable from the notion of a God.* To acknowledge the Existence of a God, and to acknowledge him a *Rewarder* are linkt together. *Heb. 11. 6.* To acknowledge him a Rewarder, is to acknowledge him a Governor: Rewards being the marks of Dominion. The very name of a God includes in it a supremacy, and an actual rule. He cannot be conceived as God, but he must be conceived as the highest Authority in the World. 'Tis as possible for him not to be God, as not to be supream. Wherein can the exercise of his excellencies be apparent, but in his Sovereign rule? To fancy an infinite power without a supream Dominion, is to fancy a mighty senseless Statue fit to be beheld, but not fit to be obey'd; as not being able or having no right to give out Orders, or not caring for the exercise of it. God cannot be supposed to be the cheif being, but he must be supposed to give Laws to all, and receive Laws from none. And if we suppose him with a perfection of Justice and Righteousness (which we must do, unless we would make a lame and imperfect God) we must suppose him to have an intire Dominion, without which he could never be able to manifest his Justice. And without a supream Dominion, he could not manifest the supremacy, and infiniteness of his Righteousness.

1. *We cannot suppose God a Creator, without supposing a Sovereign Dominion in him.* No Creature can be made without some Law in its Nature; if it had not Law, it would be Created to no purpose, to no regular end; it would be utterly unbecoming an infinite Wisdom, to create a lawless Creature, a Creature wholly vain; much less can a rational Creature be made without a Law; if it had no Law, it were not rational: For the very notion of a rational Creature implies reason to be a Law to it, and implies an acting by rule. \* If you could suppose rational Creatures without a Law, you might suppose, that they might blaspheme their Creator, and Murder their fellow Creatures, and commit the most abominable villanies destructive to humane Society without sin; for *where there is no Law, there is no transgression.* But those things are accounted sins by all mankind, and sins against the supream being: So that a Dominion and the exercise of it is so fast linkt to God, so intirely in him, so intrinsick in his Nature, that it cannot be imagined that a rational Creature, can be made by him without a stamp and mark of that Dominion in his very nature, and frame; 'tis so inseparable from God in his very act of Creation.

\* *Maccon. Colleg. Theolog. 10. Disput. 18. p. 6, 7. or thereabout.*

2. *'Tis such a Dominion as cannot be renounced by God himself.* 'Tis so intrinsick and connatural to him, so inlaid in the nature of God, that he cannot strip himself of it, nor of the exercise of it, while any Creature remains. 'Tis preserv'd by him; for it could not subsist of its self; 'tis govern'd by him, it could not else answer its end. 'Tis impossible there can be a Creature, which hath not God for its Lord. Christ himself though in regard of his Deity equal with God, yet in regard of his created state, and assuming our nature, was God's servant, was govern'd by him in the whole of his office, acted according to his command and directions; God calls him his servant. *Isaiah 42. 1.* And Christ in that Prophetick *Psalme* of him, calls God his Lord. *Psal. 16. 2. Oh my Soul, Thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord.* It was impossible it should be otherwise; Justice had been so far from being satisfi'd, that it had been highly incensed, if the order of things in the due subjection to God had been broke, and his terms had not been complied with. It would be a Judgment upon the World, if God

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should



should give up the Government to any else, as it is when he gives *Children to be Princes*. *Isaiah* 3. 4. i. e. Children in understanding.

2. *It is so inseparable, that it cannot be communicated to any Creature.* No Creature is able to exercise it, every Creature is unable to perform all the offices that belong to this Dominion. No Creature can impose Laws upon the *Consciences* of men: Man knows not the inlets into the Soul, his pen cannot reach the inwards of man. What Laws he hath power to propose to Conscience, he cannot see executed: because every Creature wants omniscience, he is not able to perceive all those breaches of the Law, which may be committed at the same time in so many Cities, so many Chambers. Or suppose an *Angel*, in regard of the height of his standing, and the insufficiency of Walls, and darkness, and distance to obstruct his view, can behold mens actions, yet he cannot know the internal acts of mens minds, and Wills without some outward eruption and appearance of them. And if he be ignorant of them, how can he execute his Laws? If he only understand the outward fact without the inward thought, how can he dispense a Justice proportionable to the crime? He must needs be ignorant of that, which adds the greatest aggravation sometimes to a sin, and inflict a lighter punishment upon that which receives a deeper tincture from the inward posture of the mind, than another fact may do, which in the outward act may appear more base and unjust; and so while he intends Righteousness, may act a degree of injustice.

\* *Verum*  
Colap. The-  
ol. Disp. 12.  
p. 12, 13.

\* Besides, no Creature can inflict a due punishment for sin; that which is due to sin, is a loss of the Vision, and sight of God; but none can deprive any of that but God himself; nor can a Creature reward another with Eternal Life, which consists in Communion with God, which none but God can bestow.

## II. Thing, Wherein the Dominion of God is founded.

1. *On the Excellency of his Nature.* Indeed a bare excellency of Nature bespeaks a fitness for Government, but doth not properly convey a right of Government. Excellency speaks aptitude, not Title: A Subject may have more Wisdom than the Prince, and be fitter to hold the Reins of Government, but he hath not a Title to Royalty. A man of large capacity, and strong virtue, is fit to serve his Countrey in Parliament, but the Election of the People conveys a Title to him. Yet a strain of Intellectual and Moral abilities beyond others, is a foundation for Dominion. And it is commonly seen that such eminences in men, though they do not invest them with a Civil Authority, or an Authority of Jurisdiction, yet they create a veneration in the minds of men; their virtue attracts reverence, and their advice is regarded as an Oracle. Old men by their age, when stored with more Wisdom and Knowledge by reason of their long experience, acquire a kind of power over the younger in their Dictates and Counsels, so that they gain by the strength of that excellency a real Authority in the minds of those men they converse with, and possess themselves of a deep respect from them. God therefore being an incomprehensible ocean of all perfection, and possessing infinitely all those virtues, that may lay a claim to Dominion, hath the first foundation of it in his own nature. His incomparable and unparallel'd excellency, as well as the greatness of his work, attracts the voluntary Worship of him as a Sovereign Lord. *Psal.* 86. 8. *Among the Gods there is none like unto thee, neither are there any works like unto thy work. All Nations shall come and Worship before thee.* Though his benefits are great engagements to our Obedience, and Affection, yet his infinite Majesty and perfection requires the first place in our acknowledgements and adorations. Upon this account God claims it, *Isaiah* 46. 9. *I am God, and there is none like me, I will do all my pleasure:* And the Prophet *Jeremy* upon the same account acknowledgeth it. *Jer.* 10. 6, 7. *Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, Oh Lord, thou art great, and thy name is great in might: who would not fear thee O King of Nations? For to thee doth it appertain: Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee.* And this is a more noble Title of Dominion. It being an uncreated Title, and more eminent than that of Creation or Prefer-



vation.\* This is the natural order, God hath plac'd in his Creature's, that the more excellent should rule the inferior. He committed not the Government of lower Creatures to *Lions*, and *Tygers*, that have a delight in blood, but no knowledge of virtue; but to *man*, who had an eminence in his nature above other Creatures, and was formed with a perfect rectitude, and a height of reason to guide the reins over them. In man the Soul being of a more sublime nature, is set of right to rule over the Body; the Mind, the most excellent Faculty of the Soul, to rule over the other Powers of it; and Wisdom the most excellent habit of the Mind, to guide and regulate that in its determinations; and when the Body and sensitive Appetite controul the Soul and Mind, 'tis an Usurpation against Nature, not a rule according to Nature; the excellency therefore of the Divine Nature is the natural foundation for his Dominion. He hath Wisdom to know what is fit for him to do, and an immutable Righteousness whereby he cannot do any thing base and unworthy. He hath a fore-knowledge whereby he is able to order all things to answer his own glorious designs, and the end of his Government; that nothing can go awry, nothing put him to a stand, and constrain him to meditate new Counsels. \* So that if it could be supposed, that the World had not been created by him, that the parts of it had met together by chance, and been compacted into such a Body; none but God the supreme and most excellent being in the World, could have merited, and deservedly challenged the Government of it: Because nothing had an excellency of Nature, to capacitate it for it, as he hath, or to enter into a contest with him for a sufficiency to Govern.

*Theol. Nat.*  
p. 657.

*Gen. 1. 1.*  
*Gen. 1. 2.*  
*Gen. 1. 3.*

2. *Tis founded in his act of Creation.* He is the Sovereign Lord, as he is the Almighty Creator. The relation of an intire Creator, induceth the relation of an absolute Lord; he that gives Being, Life, Motion, that is the sole cause of the being of a thing, which was before nothing, that hath nothing to concur with him, nothing to assist him, but by his sole power Commands it to stand up into being, is the unquestionable Lord and Proprietor of that thing, that hath no dependance but upon him. And by this act of Creation which extended to all things, he became universal Sovereign over all things. And those that wave the excellency of his Nature as the foundation of his Government, easily acknowledge the sufficiency of it upon his actual Creation. His Dominion of Jurisdiction results from Creation. When God himself makes an oration in defence of his Sovereignty, *Job 38.* His chief arguments are drawn from Creation, and *Psal. 95. 3, 5.* *The Lord is a great King above all Gods, the Sea is his, and he made it.* And so the Apostle in his Sermon to the Athenians. As he made the World and all things therein, he is stiled Lord of Heaven and Earth. *Acts 17. 24.* His Dominion also of Property stands upon this *Basis.* *Psal. 89. 7.* *The Heavens are thine, the Earth also is thine, as for the World and the fulness thereof thou hast founded them.* Upon this Title of forming *Israel* as a Creature, or rather as a Church, he demands their service to him as their Sovereign. *Oh Jacob and Israel, thou art my Servant, I have formed thee, thou art my servant Oh Israel. Isaiah 44. 21.* The Sovereignty of God naturally ariseth from the relation of all things to himself as their intire Creator, and their natural and inseparable dependance upon him in regard of their being, and well beings. It depends not upon the election of Men; God hath a natural Dominion over us as Creatures, before he hath a Dominion by consent over us as converts. As soon as ever any thing began to be a Creature, it was a vassal to God, as a Lord. Every man is acknowledged to have a right of possessing what he hath made, and a power of Dominion over what he hath fram'd. He may either cherish his own work, or dash it in peices; he may either adde a greater comeliness to it, or deface what he hath already imparted. He hath a right of property in it; no other man can without injury pilfer his own work from him. The work hath no propriety in its self: the right must lie in the immediate framer, or in the person that employed him. The first Cause of every thing hath an unquestionable Dominion of propriety in it upon the score of Justice. By the Law of Nations, the first finder of a Countrey, is



esteemed the rightful possessor, and Lord of that Country, and the first inventor of an Art hath a right of exercising it. If a man hath a just claim of Dominion over that thing, whose materials were not of his framing, but from only the addition of a new figure from his skill; as a Limner over his picture, the Cloth whereof he never made, nor the colours wherewith he draws it, were ever endued by him with their distinct qualities, but only he applies them by his art, to compose such a figure; much more hath God a rightful claim of Dominion over his Creatures, whose intire being both in matter and form, and every particle of their excellency was breathed out by the word of his mouth. He did not only give the matter a form, but bestowed upon the matter its self a being; It was formed by none to his hand, as the matter is on which an *Artist* works. He had the being of all things in his own power, and it was at his choice whether he would impart it or no; there can be no juster, and stronger ground of a claim than this. A man hath a right to a piece of brass, or Gold by his purchase, but when by his engraving he hath form'd it into an excellent Statue, there results an increase of his right upon the account of his artifice. Gods Creation of the matter of man gave him a right over man; but his Creation of him in so eminent an excellency, with reason to guide him, a clear eye of understanding to discern Light from Darkeness, and Truth from falshood, a freedom of Will to act accordingly, and an original Righteousness as the varnish and beauty of all: Here is the *strongest foundation* for a claim of Authority over man, and the strongest obligation on man for subjection to God. If all those things had been past over to God by another hand, he could not be the supream Lord, nor could have an absolute right to dispose of them at his pleasure: That would have been the invasion of anothers right. Besides, *Creation* is the only first discovery of his Dominion. \* Before the World was framed there was nothing but God himself, and properly nothing is said to have Dominion over its self; this is a relative Attribute, reflecting on the works of God. He had a right of Dominion in his Nature from eternity, but before Creation he was actually Lord only of a nullity: Where there is nothing, it can have no relation, nothing is not the subject of possession, nor of Dominion. There could be no exercise of this Dominion without Creation; What exercise can a Sovereign have without Subjects? *Sovereignty* speaks a relation to Subjects; and none is properly a Sovereign without Subjects. To conclude, from hence doth result *Gods universal Dominion*: For being maker of all, he is the Ruler of all. *And his perpetual Dominion*: For as long as God continues in the relation of Creator, the right of his Sovereignty as Creator cannot be abolisht.

\* *Stoughton*  
Righteous  
Mans Plea,  
Sermon. 6. p. 28.

\* *Vid. Lesson*  
*de perfect.*  
*Divin. p. 77. 78.*

3. *As God is the final Cause, or End of all, he is Lord of all.* \* The End hath a greater Sovereignty in actions, than the Actor it self: The Actor hath a Sovereignty over others in action, but the end for which any one works hath a Sovereignty over the Agent himself. A Limner hath a Sovereignty over the Picture he is framing, or hath fram'd, but the end for which he fram'd it, either his profit he design'd from it, or the honor and credit of skill he aimed at in it, hath a Dominion over the Limner himself. The end moves, and excites the Artist to work, it spirits him in it, conducts him in his whole business, possesses his mind, and sits triumphant in him in all the progress of his work; 'Tis the first cause for which the whole work is wrought. Now God in his actual Creation of all, is the Sovereign end of all; *for thy pleasure they are, and were created, Rev. 4. 11. The Lord hath made all things for himself, Prov. 16. 4.* Man indeed is the subordinate and immediate end of the lower Creation: And therefore had the Dominion over other Creatures granted to him. But God being the ultimate and principal end, hath the Sovereign and principal Dominion; all things as much referre to him as the last end, as they flow from him as the first Cause. So that as I said before, if the World had been compacted together by a jumbling chance without a wise hand, as some have foolishly imagined, none could have been an Antagonist with God for the Government of the World, but God in regard of the excellency of his nature would have been the Rector of it, unless those

Atomes



Atomes that had composed the World, had had an ability to Govern it. Since there could be no universal end of all things but God, God only can claim an intire right to the Government of it: For though man be the end of the lower Creation, yet man is not the end of himself, and his own being, he is not the end of the Creation of the supream Heavens, he is not able to govern them, they are out of his ken, and out of his reach. None fit in regard of the excellency of Nature, to be the chief end of the whole World but God: And therefore none can have a right to the Dominion of it but God. In this regard Gods Dominion differs from the Dominion of all Earthly Potentates. All the subjects in Creation were made for God as their end, so are not People for Rulers, but Rulers made for People for their protection, and the preservation of Order in Societies.

4. *The Dominion of God is founded upon his preservation of things.* 'Ps. 95. 3, 4. *The Lord is a great King above all Gods. Why? In his hand are all the deep places of the Earth.* While his hand holds things, his hand hath a Dominion over them. He that holds a stone in the Air, exerciseth a dominion over its natural inclination in hindring it from falling. The Creature depends wholly upon God in its preservation; as soon as that Divine hand which sustains every thing, were withdrawn, a languishment and swooning would be the next turn in the Creature. He is call'd *Lord, Adonai* in regard of his sustentation of all things by his continual influx. The Word coming of  $\text{יְהוָה}$  which signifies a basis or pillar, that supports a building. God is the Lord of all, as he is the sustainer of all by his power, as well as the Creator of all by his Word. The Sun hath a Sovereign dominion over its own beams, which depend upon it, so that if he withdraws himself, they all attend him, and the World is left in darkness. God maintains the vigor of all things, conducts them in their operations; so that nothing that they are, nothing that they have, but is owing to his preserving power. The Master of this great Family may as well be called the Lord of it, since every member of it depends upon him for the support of that being, he first gave them, and holds of his Empire. As the right to govern resulted from Creation, so it is perpetuated by the preservation of things.

5. *The dominion of God is strengthened by the innumerable benefits, he bestows upon his Creatures.* The benefits he confers upon us after Creation, are not the original ground of his dominion. A man hath not Authority over his Servant, from the kindness he shews to him, but his Authority commenceth before any act of kindness, and is founded upon a right of purchase, conquest, or compact. Dominion doth not depend upon meer benefits: Then Inferiors might have dominion over Superiors. A Peasant may save the Life of a Prince, to whom he was not subject; he hath not therefore a right to step up into his Throne, and give Laws to him. And Children that maintain their Parents in their poverty, might then acquire an Authority over them, which they can never climb to: Because the benefits they conferre, cannot parallel the benefits they have received from the Authors of their Lives. The bounties of God to us add nothing to the intrinsic right of his natural dominion, they being the effects of that Sovereignty, as he is a Rewarder and Governour. As the benefits a Prince bestows upon his favorite increases not that right of Authority, which is inherent in the Crown; but strengthens that dominion, as it stands in relation to the receiver, by increasing the obligation of the favorite to an observance of him, not only as his natural Prince, but his gracious Benefactor. The beneficence of God adds, though not an original right of power, yet a foundation of a stronger upbraiding the Creature, if he walks in a violation and forgetfulness of those benefits, and pull in peices the links of that ingenuous duty they call for; and an occasion of exercising of Justice in punishing the delinquent; which is a part of his Empire. *Isaiah 1. 2. Hear O Heavens, and give Ear O Earth, the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished Children, and they have rebelled against me.* Thus the fundamental right as Creator, is made more indisputable by his relation as a Benefactor, and more as being so after a forfeiture of what

was



was enjoyed by Creation. The benefits of God are innumerable, and so magnificent, that they cannot meet with any compensation from the Creature: And therefore do necessarily require a submission from the Creature, and an acknowledgement of Divine Authority. But that benefit of Redemption doth add a stronger right of dominion to God: Since he hath not only as a Creator given them Being, and Life as his Creatures, but paid a price, the price of his Sons blood for their rescue from Captivity, so that he hath a Sovereignty of Grace as well as Nature, and the ransom'd ones belong to him as Redeemer, as well as Creator. *1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. Ye are not your own: For ye are bought with a price,* therefore your Body and your Spirit are Gods. By this he acquir'd a right of another kind, and bought us from that uncontrollable Lordship, we affected over our selves by the sin of *Adam*, that he might use us as his own peculiar for his own glory and service. By this Redemption there results to God a right over our bodies, over our Spirits, over our services, as well as by Creation, and to shew the strength of this right, the Apostle repeats it; *you are bought*, a purchase cannot be without a price paid; but he adds price also [*bought with a price.*] To strengthen the Title, purchase gave him a new right; and the greatness of the price established that right. The more a man pays for a thing, the more usually we say, he deserves to have it, he hath paid enough for it. It was indeed price enough, and too much for such vile Creatures as we are.

### III. The third thing is, *The Nature of this Dominion.*

1. This Dominion is *Independent*. His Throne is in the Heavens; the Heavens depend not upon the Earth, nor God upon his Creatures. Since he is *Independent* in regard of his Essence, he is so in his dominion, which flows from the excellency and fulness of his Essence. As he receives his Essence from none, so he derives his dominion from none. All other dominion except paternal Authority is rooted originally in the wills of men. \* The first Title was the consent of the People, or the conquest of others by the help of those People that first consented. And in the exercise of it, Earthly dominion depends upon assistance of the Subjects, and the Members being joyn'd with the head carry on the work of Government, and prevent Civil dissensions; in the support of it, it depends upon the Subjects Contributions, and Taxes. The Subjects in their strength are the Arms, and in their Purfes the Sinews of Government. But God depends upon none in the foundation of his Government; he is not a Lord by the Votes of his Vassals. Nor is it successively handed to him by any Predecessor, nor constituted by the power of a Superior. Nor forced he his way by War, and conquest, nor precariously attained it by suit or flattery, or bribing promises. He holds not the right of his Empire from any other; he hath no Superior to hand him to his Throne, and settle him by Commission. He is therefore called *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, having none above him. *A great King above all Gods, Psal. 95. 3.* Needing no Licence from any when to act, nor direction how to act, or assistance in his action: He owes not any of those to any person; he was not ordered by any other to Create, and therefore receives not orders from any other to rule over what he hath created. He received not his power and wisdom from another, and therefore is not Subject to any for the rule of his Government. He only made his own Subjects, and from himself hath the sole Authority; his own will was the cause of their beings, and his own will is the director of their actions. He is not determined by his Creatures, in any of his motions, but determines the Creatures in all. His actions are not regulated by any Law without him, but by a Law within him, the Law of his own Nature. 'Tis impossible he can have any rule without himself: because there is nothing Superior to himself. Nor doth he depend upon any in the exercise of his Government, he needs no Servants in it, when he uses Creatures it is not out of want of their help, but for the manifestation of his wisdom and power. What he doth by his Subjects, he can do by himself: *The Government is upon his Shoulder, Isaiah 9. 6.* To shew that he needs not any supporters. All other governments flow from him.

\* Raynaud.  
Theolog. Natural. p. 750,  
751, 752.



him, all other Authorities depend upon him; *Dei Gratia*, or *Dei Providentiâ* is in the style of Princes. As their being is deriv'd from his power, so their Authority is but a branch of his dominion. They are governors by Divine Providence; God is Governour by his sole nature. All motions depend upon the first Heaven, which moves all; but that depends upon nothing. The Government of Christ depends upon God's increated dominion, and is by Commission from him; Christ assum'd not this honour to himself, 'But he that said unto him thou art my son, bestow'd it upon him. He put all things under his feet, but not himself. 1 Cor. 15. 27. When he saith all things are put under him, he is excepted, which did put all things under him. He sits still as an independent Governour upon his Throne.

2. This dominion is *Absolute*. If his Throne be in the Heavens, there is nothing to controul him. If he be independent, he must needs be absolute; since he hath no cause in conjunction with him as Creator, that can share with him in his right, or restrain him in the disposal of his Creature. His Authority is unlimited; in this regard the Title of Lord becomes not any but God properly. *Tiberius* tho' 'g't none of the best, though one of the subtlest Princes, accounted the Title of Lord a reproach to him: Since he was not absolute. \*

\* *Sueton. de Tiberio cap. 27.*

1. *Absolute in regard of Freedom and Liberty.*

1. Thus Creation is a work of his *meer Sovereignty*; he Created, because it was his pleasure to Create. *Rev. 4. 11.* He is not necessitated to do this or that. He might have chosen, whether he would have fram'd an Earth, and Heavens, and laid the foundations of his Chambers in the Waters. He was under no obligation, to reduce things from nullity to existence.

2. *Preservation* is the fruit of his *Sovereignty*. When he had called the World to stand out, he might have ordered it to return into its dark den of nothingness, ript up every part of its foundation, or have given being to many more Creatures, than he did. If you consider his absolute sovereignty, why might he not have devested *Adam* presently of those rational perfections, wherewith he had endow'd him? And might he not have metamorphos'd him into some Beast, and elevated some Beast into a rational nature? Why might he not have degraded an *Angel* to a Worm, and advanc'd a Worm to the nature and condition of an *Angel*? Why might he not have revoked that grant of dominion, which he had pass'd to man over all Creatures? It was free to him to permit sin to enter into the Earth, or to have excluded it out of the Earth, as he doth out of Heaven.

3. *Redemption* is a fruit of his *Sovereignty*. By his absolute *Sovereignty* he might have confirmed all the *Angels* in their standing by Grace, and prevented the revolt of any of their members from him; and when there was a revolt both in Heaven and Earth, it was free to him, to have call'd out his Son to assume the Angelical, as well as the humane nature, or have exercised his dominion in the destruction of Men and Devils, rather than in the Redemption of any; he was under no obligation, to restore either the one or the other.

4. *May he not impose what terms he pleases?* May he not impose what Laws he please, and exact what he will of his Creature without promising any Rewards? May he not use his own for his own honour, as well as men use for their credit what they do possess by his indulgence?

5. *Affliction* is an act of his *Sovereignty*. By this right of *Sovereignty* may not God take away any man's Goods, since they were his doles? As he was not indebted to us, when he bestow'd them, so he cannot wrong us, when he removes them. He takes from us what is more his own, than it is ours, and was never ours but by his gift, and that for a time only, not for ever. By this right, he may determine our times, put a period to our days, when he pleases, strip us of one member, and lop off another. Man's being was from him, and why should he not have a *Sovereignty* to take, what he had a *Sovereignty* to give? Why should this seem strange to any of us, since we our selves exercise an absolute Dominion over



over those things in our possession, which have sense, and feeling; as well as over those that want it? Doth not every man think, he hath an absolute Authority over the Utensils of his house, over his Horse, his Dog, to preserve, or kill him, to do what he please with him, without rendring any other reason, than *'tis my own*? May not God do much more? Doth not his dominion over the work of his hands transcend that which a man can claim over his Beast, that he never gave life unto? He that dares dispute against God's absolute right, fancies himself as much a God as his Creator; understands not the vast difference between the Divine nature and his own; between the Sovereignty of God and his own, which is all the theme God himself discourseth upon in those stately Chapters, *Job 32, 39. &c.* Not mentioning a Word of *Job's* sin, but only vindicating the rights of his own Authority. Nor doth *Job* in his reply, *Job 40. 4.* speak of his sin, but of his natural vileness as a Creature in the presence of his Creator.

By this right; God unstops the Bottles of Heaven in one place, and stops them in another, causing it to *Rain upon one City, and not upon another, Amos 4. 7.* Ordering the Clouds to move to this or that quarter where he hath a mind to be a Benefactor or a Judge.

6. *Unequal dispensations are acts of his Sovereignty.* By this right, he is patient toward those, whose sins by the common voice of men deserve speedy Judgments, and pours out pain upon those, that are patterns of vertue to the World. By this he gives sometimes the worst of men an Ocean of wealth and honor to swim in, and reduceth an useful and exemplary grace to a scanty poverty. By this he *Rules the Kingdoms of men*, and sets a Crown upon the head of the *last of men, Dan. 4. 17.* While he deposeth another, that seem'd to deserve a weightier Diadem. This is, as he is the Lord of the Ammunition of his Thunders, and the Treasures of his Bounty.

7. *He may inflict what torments he pleases.* Some say by this right of Sovereignty he may inflict what torments he pleaseth upon an innocent person; which indeed will not bear the nature of a punishment as an effect of Justice, without the supposal of a crime; but a torment, as an effect of that Sovereign right he hath over his Creature, which is as absolute over his work, as the *Potters* power is over his own Clay, *Jerem. 18. 6. Rom. 9. 21.* \* May not the Potter after his labour, either set his vessel up to adorn his House, or knock it in peices, and fling it upon the *Dunghill*; separate it to some noble use, or condemn it to some sordid service. Is the right of God over his Creatures less than that of the Potter over his Vessel, since God contributed all to his Creature, but the Potter never made the Clay, which is the substance of the Vessel, nor the water which was necessary, to make it tractable, but only moulded the substance of it into such a shape? The Vessel that is fram'd, and the Potter that frames it differ only in Life, the body of the Potter whereby he executes his Authority, is of no better a mould than the Clay the matter of his Vessel; shall he have so absolute a power over that, which is so near him, and shall not God over that which is so infinitely distant from him? The Vessel perhaps might plead for its self, that it was once part of the Body of a man, and as good as the Potter himself; whereas no Creature can plead, it was part of God, and as good as God himself. Though there be no man in the World, but deserves affliction, yet the Scripture sometimes layes affliction upon the score of God's dominion, without any respect to the sin of the afflicted person. *James 5. 15.* Speaking of a sick person, *if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him*, whereby is implied, that he might be struck into sickness by God without any respect to a particular sin, but in a way of Tryal; and that his affliction sprung not from any exercise of Divine Justice, but from his absolute sovereignty. And so in the case of the blind man, when the Disciples askt, for what sin it was, whether for his own, or his Parents sin he was born blind, *John 9. 3.* Neither hath this man sinned nor his Parents; which speaks in its self not against the whole current of Scripture; but the words import thus much, that God in this blindness from the birth, neither respected any sin of the mans own, nor of his Parents, but he did it as an absolute sovereign, to manifest his own Glory

\* *Leffius de  
perfect. Divin.  
p. 66. 67.*



Glory in that miraculous cure, which was wrought by Christ. Though afflictions do not happen without the desert of the Creature, yet some afflictions may be sent without any particular respect to that desert, meerly for the manifestation of God's Glory, since the Creature was made for God himself, and his honour, and therefore may be used in a serviceableness to the Glory of the Creator.

2. His Dominion is absolute in regard of unlimitedness by any Law without him. He is an absolute Monarch, that makes Laws for his Subjects, but is not bound by any himself, nor receives any rules, and Laws from his Subjects for the management of his Government. But most Governments in the World are bounded by Laws made by common consent. But when Kings are not limited by the Laws of their Kingdoms, yet they are bounded by the Law of Nature, and by the Providence of God. But God is under no Law without himself, his rule is within him, the rectitude and Righteousness of his own nature, he is not under that Law he hath prescribed to man. The Law was not made for a *Righteous man*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 9. Much less for a Righteous God. God is his own Law, his own nature is his rule, as his own Glory is his end, himself is his end, and himself is his Law. He is moved by nothing without himself, nothing hath the dominion of a motive over him but his own will, which is his rule for all his actions in Heaven and Earth. *Dom.* 4. 32. He rules in the Kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will. And *Rom.* 9. 13. He hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy; As all things are wrought by him according to his own eternal Ideas in his own mind, so all is wrought by him according to the inward motive in his own will, which was the manifestation of his own honour. The greatest motives therefore that the best persons have used, when they have pleaded for any grant from God, was his own Glory, which would be advanced by an answer of their Petition.

3. His dominion is absolute in regard of Supremacy and uncontrollableness. None can implead him, and cause him to render a reason of his actions. He is the Sovereign King, *Who may say unto him what dost thou?* *Eccles.* 8. 4. 'Tis an absurd thing for any to dispute with God. *Rom.* 9. 20. *Who art thou, O Man, that repliest against God?* Thou a man, a peice of dust, to argue with a God, incomprehensibly above thy reason about the reason of his works. Let the Pottheards strive with the Pottheards of the Earth, but not with him that fashioned them. *Isaiah* 45. 9. In all the desolations he works, he asserts his own Supremacy to silence men. *Psal.* 46. 10. *Be still, and know, that I am God?* Beware of any quarrelling motions in your minds, 'tis sufficient, that I am, God, that is supream, and will not be impleaded, and censur'd, or worded with by any Creature about what I do. He is not bound to render a reason of any of his proceedings. Subjects are accountable to their Princes, and Princes to God, God to none; since he is not limited by any Superior, his Prerogative is supream.

4. His dominion is absolute in regard of Irresistibleness. Other Governments are bounded by Law, so that what a Governour hath strength to do, he hath not a right to do. Other Governours have a limited ability, that what they have a right to do, they have not always a strength to do, they may want a power, to execute their own Counsels. But God is destitute of neither; he hath an infinite right, and an infinite strength; his word is a Law, he commands things, to stand out of nothing, and they do so. He commanded, or spake *ὁμιλον*, light to shine out of darkness, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. There is no distance of time between his word, *Let there be Light, and there was Light.* *Gen.* 1. 3. Magistrates often use not their Authority for fear of giving occasion to insurrections, which may overturn their Empire. But if the Lord will work, *Who shall let it?* *Isaiah* 43. 19. And if God will not work, who shall force him? He can check, and overturn all other powers, his decrees cannot be stopped, nor his hand held back by any; if he wills to dash the whole World in peices, no Creature can maintain its being



against his order. He sets the Ordinances of the Heavens, and the dominion thereof in the Earth. And sends Lightnings, that they may go, and say unto him, here we are. Job 38. 33. 34.

3. Yet this dominion though it be absolute, is not Tyrannical, but is managed by the rules of Wisdom, Righteousness, and Goodness. If his Throne be in the Heavens, it is Pure, and Good: Because the Heavens are the purest parts of the Creation, and influence by their Goodness the lower Earth. Since he is his own rule, and his nature is infinitely Wise, Holy, and Righteous, he cannot do a thing, but what is unquestionably agreeable with Wisdom, Justice and Purity. In all the exercises of his Sovereign right, he is never unattended with those perfections of his Nature. Might not God by his absolute power have pardon'd mens guilt, and thrown the invading sin out of his Creatures? But in regard of his Truth pawn'd in his threatening, and in regard of his Justice, which demand'd satisfaction, he would not. Might not God by his absolute sovereignty admit a man into his Friendship, without giving him any Grace? But in regard of the incongruity of such an act to his Wisdom and Holiness, he will not. May he not by his absolute power, refuse to accept a man, that desires to please him, and reject a purely innocent Creature? But in regard of his Goodness and Righteousness he will not. Though innocence be amiable in its own Nature, yet it is not necessary in regard of God's sovereignty, that he should love it; but in regard of his goodness it is necessary, and he will never do otherwise. As God never acts to the utmost of his power, so he never exerts the utmost of his sovereignty: because it would be inconsistent with those other properties, which render him perfectly adorable to the Creature. As no intelligent Creature, neither Angel nor Man can be fram'd without a Law in his Nature; so we cannot imagine God without a Law in his own Nature, unless we would fancy him a rude, Tyrannical, foolish Being, that hath nothing of Holiness, Goodness, Righteousness, Wisdom. If he made the Heavens in Wisdom, Psa. 136. 5. He made them by some rule, not by a meer will, but a rule within himself, not without. A wise work is never the result of an absolute unguided Will.

1. This dominion is managed by the rule of Wisdom. What may appear to us, to have no other spring than absolute sovereignty, would be found to have a depth of amazing Wisdom, and accountable reason, were our short capacities long enough to fathom it. When the Apostle had been discoursing of the eternal Counsells of God, in seizing upon one man, and letting go another, in rejecting the Jews and gathering in the Gentiles, which appears to us to be results only of an absolute dominion, yet he resolves not those amazing acts into that, without taking it for granted, that they were govern'd by exact Wisdom, though beyond his ken to see, and his line to sound. Rom. 11. 33. Oh the depth of the riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out? There are some things in matters of state, that may seem to be acts of meer Will, but if we were acquainted with the Arcana Imperii, the inward Engins which moved them, and the ends aimed at in those undertakings, we might find a rich vein of prudence in them, to incline us to Judge otherwise than bare Arbitrary proceedings. The other Attributes of Power and Goodness are more easily perceptible in the works of God, than his Wisdom. The first view of the Creation strikes us with this sentiment, that the Author of this great Fabrick was mighty, and beneficial; but his Wisdom lies deeper, than to be discern'd at the first glance without a diligent enquiry. As at the first casting our eyes upon the Sea, we behold its motion, colour, and something of its vastness, but we cannot presently fathom the depth of it, and understand those lower Fountains, that supply that great Ocean of Waters: 'Tis part of God's Sovereignty, as it is of the wisest Princes, that he hath a Wisdom beyond the reach of his Subjects; 'tis not for a finite nature to understand an infinite Wisdom, nor for a foolish Creature that hath lost his understanding by the fall, to judge of the reason of the methods of a wise Counsellor. Yet those actions



actions that favour more of Sovereignty, present men with some glances of his Wisdom. Was it meer will, that he suffered some Angels to fall? But his Wisdom was in it for the manifestation of his Justice; as it was also in the case of *Pharaoh*. Was it meer will, that he suffered sin to be committed by man? was not his Wisdom in this for the discovery of his mercy, which never had been known without that, which should render a Creature miserable? *Rom. 11. 32. He hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have Mercy upon all.* Though God had such an absolute right, to have annihilated the World, as soon as ever he had made it, yet how had this consisted with his Wisdom, to have created a Creature after his own image one day, and despis'd it so much the next, as to cashier it from Being? What Wisdom had it been, to make a thing, only to destroy it? To repent of his work as soon as ever it came out of his hands, without any occasion offered by the Creature. If God be supposed to be Creator, he must be supposed to have an end in Creation; what End can that be but himself and his own Glory, the manifestation of the perfections of his Nature? What perfection could have been discovered in so quick an annihilation, but that of his power in Creating, and of his Sovereignty in snatching away the Being of his Rational Creature, before it had laid the methods of acting? What Wisdom to make a World, and a reasonable Creature for no use? Not to Praise, and Honour him, but to be broken in pieces, and destroy'd by him?

2. *His Sovereignty is managed according to the rule of Righteousness.* Worldly Princes often fancy Tyranny and Oppression to be the chief marks of Sovereignty, and think their Scepters not beautiful, till died in blood, nor the Throne secure, till established upon slain Carcasses. But *Justice and Judgment are the Foundation of the Throne of God, Psal. 89. 14.* Alluding perhaps to the supporters of Arms, and Thrones, which among Princes are the figures of Lions, Emblems of Courage, as *Solomon* had, *1 Kings 10. 19.* But God makes not so much might, as right the support of his. He sits on a *Throne of Holiness. Psal. 47. 8.* As he reigns over the Heathens, referring to the calling of the *Gentiles* after the rejecting the *Jews*; the *Psalmist* here praising the Righteousness of it, as the *Apostle* had the unsearchable Wisdom of it. *Rom. 11. 33. In all his ways he is Righteous, Psal. 145. 17.* In his ways of Terror, as well as those of sweetness; in those works wherein little else but that of his Sovereignty appears to us. 'Tis always linkt with his Holiness, that he will not do by his absolute right any thing but what is conformable to it: since his dominion is founded upon the excellency of his Nature, he will not do any thing but what is agreeable to it, and becoming his other perfections. Though he be an absolute Sovereign, he is not an Arbitrary Governor; *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? Gen. 18. 25. i. e.* 'Tis impossible, but he should act righteously in every punctilio of his Government, Since his Righteousness capacitates him to be a Judge, not a Tyrant of all the Earth. The *Heathen Poets* represented their chief God *Jupiter* with *Themis*, or Right, sitting by him upon his Throne in all his Orders. God cannot by his absolute Sovereignty command some things: Because they are directly against unchangeable Righteousness as to command a Creature to hate, or blaspheme the Creator, not to own him, nor praise him. It would be a manifest unrighteousness, to order the Creature not to own him, upon whom he depends both in its being and well being: This would be against that natural duty, which is indispensably due from every rational Creature to God. This would be to order him, to lay aside his reason while he retains it, to disown him to be the Creator, while man remains his Creature. This is repugnant to the Nature of God, and the true nature of the Creature: Or to exact any thing of man, but what he had given him a capacity, in his original nature to perform. If any command were above our natural power, it would be unrighteous; as to command a man to grasp the Globe of the Earth, to stride over the Sea, to lave out the waters of the Ocean; these things are impossible, and become not the Righteousness and Wisdom of God to enjoin. There can be no obligation on man to an impossibility. God had a free dominion over nullity before the Creation, he could



call it out into the being of man and beast: But he could not do any thing in Creation foolishly because of his infinite Wisdom; nor could he by the right of his absolute Sovereignty make man sinful, because of his infinite purity. As it is impossible for him not to be Sovereign; 'Tis impossible for him to deny his Deity, and his purity. 'Tis Lawful for God to do what he will, but his will being ordered by the Righteousness of his nature, as infinite as his will, he cannot do any thing but what is just; and therefore in his dealing with men, you find him in *Scripture* submitting the reasonableness and equity of his proceedings to the Judgment of his deprav'd Creatures, and the inward dictates of their own Consciences. *Isaiah 5. 3. And now, Oh Inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge I pray you, between me and my Vineyard.* Though God be the great Sovereign of the World, yet he acts not in a way of absolute Sovereignty.

He rules by Law, he is a *Largiver*, as well as a *King*, *Isaiah 33. 22.* It had been repugnant to the nature of a rational Creature, to be ruled otherwise; to be govern'd as a beast, this had been to frustrate those Faculties of Will and Understanding, which had been given him. To conclude this; when we say, God can do this or that, or command this or that, his Authority is not bounded, and limited properly. Who can reasonably detract from his Almightyness, because he cannot do any thing, which favors of weakness; and what detracting is it from his Authority, that he cannot do any thing unbecomly for the dignity of his nature? 'Tis rather from the infiniteness of his Righteousness than the straitness of his Authority; at most it is but a voluntary bounding his dominion by the Law of his own Holiness.

3. *His Sovereignty is managed according to the rule of Goodness.* Some Potentates there have been in the World, that have loved to suck the blood, and drink the tears of their Subjects, that would rule more by fear than love, \* like *Clearchus* the Tyrant of *Heracleia*, who bore the figure of a *Thunderbolt* instead of a *Scepter*, and named his Son *Thunder*; thereby to tutor him, to terrifie his Subjects. But as Gods Throne is a Throne of Holiness, so it is a *Throne of Grace*, *Heb. 4. 16.* A Throne encircled with a Rainbow. *Ezek. 4. 23. In sight like to an Emerald.* An Emblem of the Covenant, that hath the pleasantness of a green colour, delightful to the eye, betokening Mercy. Though his Nature be infinitely excellent above us, and his power infinitely transcendent over us, yet the Majesty of his Government is temper'd with an unspeakable Goodness. He acts not so much as an absolute Lord, as a gracious Sovereign and obliging Benefactor. He delights not to make his Subjects slaves. Exacts not of them any servile and fearful, but a generous and cheerful obedience. He requires them not to Fear or Worship him so much for his power as his Goodness. He requires not of a rational Creature any thing repugnant to the Honour, Dignity, and Principles of such a nature; not any thing that may shame, disgrace it, and make it weary of its own being, and the service it owes to its Sovereign. He draws by the cords of a man; his Goodness renders his Laws as sweet as Honey or the Honey Comb to an unvitiated Palate, and a renew'd mind. And though it be granted, he hath a full dispose of his Creature, as the Potter of his Vessel, and might by his absolute Sovereignty inflict upon an innocent an eternal torment, yet his Goodness will never permit him to use this Sovereign right to the hurt of a Creature, that deserves it not. If God should cast an innocent Creature into the furnace of his wrath, who can question him? But who can think, that his Goodness will do so? Since that is as infinite as his Authority? As not to punish the sinner, would be a denial of his Justice, so to torment an innocent, would be a denial of his Goodness. A man hath an absolute power over his Beast, and may take away his Life, and put him to a great deal of pain; but that moral vertue of Pity and Tenderness would not permit him to use this right, but when it conduceth to some greater good, than that can be evil; either for the good of man which is the end of the Creature, or for the good of the poor beast it self, to rid him of a greater misery: None but a savage nature, a disposition to be abhorr'd, would

\* *Clas. Poly-Histor. lib. 4. cap. 22.*



torture a poor beast merely for his pleasure. 'Tis as much against the nature of God, to punish one eternally, that hath not deserved it, as it is to deny himself, and act any thing foolishly, and unbeseeming his other perfections, which render him Majestical, and adorable. To afflict an innocent Creature for his own good, or for the good of the World, as in the case of the Redeemer, is so far from being against Goodness, that it is the highest Testimony of his tender Bowels to the Sons of men. God though he be Mighty, *withdraws not his Eyes*, i. e. his tender respect *from the Righteous*, Job 36. 5, 7, 8, 9, 10. And if he *bind them in Fetters*, 'tis to *show them their Transgressions*, and *open their Ear to Discipline*, and renewing commands in a more sensible strain, *to depart from iniquity*. What was said of *Fabritius*, you may as soon remove the Sun from its course, as *Fabritius* from his honesty: may be of God, you may as soon dash in peices his Throne, as separate his Goodness from his Sovereignty.

4. Proposition, *This Sovereignty is extensive over all Creatures*. He rules all, as the Heavens do over the Earth. He is *King of Worlds*, *King of Ages*, as the word translated *eternal* signifies, 1 Tim. 1. 17. τῷ δὲ βασιλεὶ τῶν αἰώνων. And the same word is so translated, Heb. 1. 2. By whom also he made the Worlds, the same word is rendred Worlds, Heb. 11. 3. *The Worlds were fram'd by the Word of God*. God is King of Ages or Worlds, of the invisible World, and the sensible, of all from the beginning of their Creation, of whatsoever is measur'd by a time. It extends over Angels and Devils, over wicked and good, over rational, and irrational Creatures: all things bow down under his hand, nothing can be exempted from him: Because there is nothing but was extracted by him from nothing into being. All things Essentially depend upon him: And therefore must be Essentially Subject to him: the extent of his dominion flows from the perfection of his Essence, since his Essence is unlimited, his Royalty cannot be restrained. His Authority is as void of any imperfection, as his Essence is; it reaches out to all points of the Heaven above, and the Earth below. Other Princes Reign in a spot of ground. Every worldly Potentate hath the confines of his dominions. The *Pirenean* Mountains divide *France* from *Spain*, and the *Alpes*, *Italy* from *France*. None are call'd Kings absolutely, but Kings of this or that place. But God is the King, the spacious Firmament limits not his dominion. If we could suppose him bounded by any place in regard of his presence; yet he could never be out of his own dominion: whatsoever he looks upon, wheresoever he were, would be under his rule. Earthly Kings may step out of their own Countrey into the Territory of a Neighbour Prince; and as one leaves his Countrey, so he leaves his dominion behind him; but Heaven and Earth and every particle of both is the Territory of God. *He hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom Rules over all*.

1. *The Heaven of Angels and other excellent Creatures belong to his Authority*. He is principally call'd the *Lord of Hosts* in relation to his intire command over the Angelical Legions: Therefore Verse 21. following the Text, they are call'd his *Hosts*, and *Ministers that do his pleasure*. Jacob called him so before. Gen. 32. 1, 2. When he met the Angels of God, he calls them *the Host of God*, and the *Evangelist* long after calls them so. Luke 2. 13. *A multitude of the Heavenly Host praising God*, and all this Host he commands. *Isaiah* 45. 12. *My hands have stretch'd out the Heavens, and all their Host have I commanded*. He employs them all in his service, and when he issues out his orders to them, to do this or that, he finds no resistance of his Will.

And the inanimate Creatures in Heaven are at his beck, they are his Armies in Heaven, dispos'd in an excellent order in their several ranks, *Psalms* 147. 4. *He calls the Starrs by Name*; they render a due obedience to him, as Servants to their Master; when he singles them out, *and calls them by Name*, to do some special service, he calls them out to their several Offices, as the General of an Army appoints the station of every Regiment in a Battalia. Or *he calls them by Name*. i. e. He imposeth names upon them, a sign of dominion. The giving  
names



Names to the inferior Creatures being the first act of *Adam's* derivative dominion over them. These are under the Sovereignty of God. The *Stars* by their influences fight against *Sisera*. *Judg.* 5. 20. And the *Sun* holds in its Reins, and stands stone still, to light *Joshua* to a compleat victory, *Josh.* 10. 12. They are all marshall'd in their ranks, to receive his word of command, and fight in close order, as being desirous to have a share in the ruine of the Enemies of their Sovereign. And those Creatures which mount up from the Earth, and take their place in the lower Heavens, Vapours whereof Hail and Snow are form'd, are part of the Army, and do not only receive, but fulfill his word of Command, *Psal.* 148. 8. These are his stores and Magazines of Judgment against a time of trouble, and a day of *Battle and Warr*, *Job* 38. 22, 23. The Sovereignty of God is visible in all their motions, in their going and returning. If he says go, they go, if he say come, they come, if he say do this, they gird up their Loynes, and stand stiff to their duty.

2. *The Hell of Devils belong to his Authority.* They have cast themselves out of the Arms of his Grace into the Furnace of his Justice; they have by their revolt forfeited the Treasure of his Goodness, but cannot exempt themselves from the Scepter of his dominion; when they would not own him as a Lord Father, they are under him as a Lord Judge, they are cast out of his affection, but not freed from his yoke. He rules over the good Angels as his Subjects, over the evil ones as his Rebels. In whatsoever relation he stands, either as a Friend or Enemy, he never loses that of a Lord. A Prince is the Lord of his Criminals, as well as of his Loyallest Subjects. By this right of his Sovereignty, he uses them to punish some, and be the occasion of benefit to others; on the wicked he employs them as instruments of vengeance, towards the Godly, as in the case of *Job*, as an Instrument of kindness for the manifestation of his sincerity against the intention of that malicious Executioner. Though the Devils are the Executioners of his Justice, 'tis not by their own Authority but God's; as those that are employed either to rack, or execute a Malefactor, are Subjects to the Prince not only in the quality of Men, but in the execution of their function.\* The Devil by drawing men to sin acquires no right to himself over the sinner: For man by sin offends not the Devil, but God; and becomes guilty of punishment under God. When therefore the Devil is us'd by God for the punishment of any, 'tis an act of his Sovereignty for the manifestation of the order of his Justice. And as most Nations use the vilest persons in Offices of execution, so doth God those vile Spirits. He doth not ordinarily use the good Angels in those Offices of vengeance, but in the preservation of his People. When he would solely punish, he employs *evil Angels*. *Psal.* 78. 49. A Troop of Devils. His Sovereignty is extended over the *deceiver and the deceived*. *Job* 12. 16. Over both the Malefactor and the Executioner, the Devil and his Prisoner. He useth the natural malice of the Devils for his own just ends, and by his Sovereign Authority orders them to be the Executioners of his Judgments upon their own vassals, as well as sometimes inflictors of punishments upon his own Servants.

\* *Saunders*, vol. 2. lib. 8. cap. 20. p. 736.

3. *The Earth of men, and other Creatures belongs to his Authority.* *Psal.* 47. 7. God is King of *all the Earth*, and rules to the ends of it. *Psal.* 59. 13. Ancient Atheists confin'd Gods dominion to the heavenly Orbs, and bounded it within the Circuit of the Celestial Sphear, *Job* 22. 14. *He walks in the Circuit of Heaven.* i. e. he exerciseth his dominion only there. \* *Pedumpositio* was the sign of the possession of a piece of Land, and the Dominion of the possessor of it; and Land was resign'd by such a Ceremony, as now by the delivery of a *Twig or Turf*.

\* *Bolduc.* in loc.

But his *Dominion* extends.

1. *Over the least Creatures.* All the Creatures of the Earth are listed in Christ's Muster-roll, and make up the number of his Regiments. He hath an Host on Earth, as well as in Heaven. *Gen.* 2. 1. *The Heavens and the Earth were finished, and all the Host of them.* And they are *all his Servants*, *Psal.* 119. 91. and

move



move at his pleasure. And he vouchsafes the Title of his Army to the *Locust*, *Caterpillar*, and *Palmer Worm*, *Joel. 2. 25.* And describes their motions by Military Words, *climbing the walls, marching not breaking their ranks. Verse 7.* He hath the command as a great General over the highest *Angel*, and the meanest *Worm*; all the kinds of the smallest *Insects* he presleth for his service. By this Sovereignty he muzzled the devouring nature of the fire, to preserve the three *Children*, and let it loose to consume their adversaries; and if he speaks the word the *stormy Waves* are hush, as if they had no Principle of rage within them. *Psal. 89. 9.* Since the meanest Creature attains it end, and no arrow that God hath by his power shot into the World, but hits the mark he aim'd at; we must conclude, that there is a Sovereign hand, that governs all. Not a spot of Earth, or Air, or Water in the World, but is his possession, not a Creature in any Element, but is his Subject.

2. *His Dominion extends over Men.* It extends over the highest Potentate, as well as the meanest Peasant, the proudest Monarch is no more exempt than the most languishing Beggar. He lays not aside his Authority to please the Prince, nor strains it up to terrifie the indigent. *He accepts not the persons of Princes, nor regards the rich more than the Poor: For they are all the work of his hands. Job 34. 19.* Both the powers and weakneses, the Gallantry and Peasantry of the Earth stand and fall at his pleasure. Man in innocence was under his Authority as his Creature, and man in his revolt, is further under his Authority as a Criminal. As a Person is under the Authority of a Prince as a Governour, while he obeys his Laws, and further under the Authority of the Prince as a Judge, when he violates his Laws. Man is under God's dominion in every thing, in his settlement, in his calling, in the ordering his very Habitation. *Acts 17. 26. He determines the bounds of their Habitations.* He never yet permitted any to be universal Monarch in the World, nor over the fourth part of it, though several in the Pride of their heart, have design'd, and attempted it. The *Pope* who hath bid the fairest for it in Spirituall, never attain'd it, and when his power was most flourishing, there were multitudes, that would never acknowledge his Authority.

3. But especially this dominion in the peculiarity of its extent, is seen in the exercise of it over the Spirits and Hearts of Men. Earthly Governours have by his indulgence a share with him in a dominion over mens bodies, upon which account he graceth Princes and Judges with the Title of Gods. *Psal. 82. 6.* But the highest Prince is but a Prince according to the Flesh, as the *Apostle* calls Masters in relation to their Servants. *Colos. 3. 22.*

God is the Sovereign; Man rules over the Beast in Man, the Body; and God rules over the Man in Man, the Soul. It sticks not in the outward surface, but peirceth to the inward Marrow. 'Tis impossible God should be without this; if our wills were independent on him, we were in some sort equal with himself, in part Gods as well as Creatures. 'Tis impossible a Creature, either in whole or in part, can be exempted from it: Since he is the fashioner of hearts as well as of Bodies. He is the Father of Spirits: And therefore hath the right of a paternal dominion over them. When he established man Lord of the other Creatures, he did not strip himself of the propriety. And when he made man a free Agent, and Lord of the acts of his Will, he did not devest himself of the Sovereignty.

His Sovereignty is seen,

1. *In Gifting of the spirits of Men.* Earthly Magistrates have hands too short, to inspire the Hearts of their Subjects with worthy sentiments. When they conferre an employment, they are not able to convey an ability with it fit for the station. They may as soon frame a Statue of liquid water, and guild, or paint it over with the costliest colours, as impart to any a State-Head, for a State-Ministry. But when God chooseth a *Saul* from so mean an employment as seeking of Asses, he can treasure up in him a Spirit fit for Government. And sice *David*, in Age a strip-



stripling, and by Education a Shepherd, with Courage to Encounter, and skill to defeat a mighty *Goliath*. And when he designs a person for Glory, to stand before his Throne, he can put a *new* and a Royal *Spirit into him*. *Ezek. 36. 26.* God only can infuse habits into the Soul, to capacitate it to act nobly and generously.

2. His Sovereignty is seen *in regard of the inclinations of mens Wills*. No Creature can immediately work upon the will, to guide it to what point he pleaseth, though mediately it may, by proposing reasons which may Myster the understanding, and thereby determine the Will. But God bows the Hearts of men by the efficacy of his dominion, to what Centre he pleaseth. When the more overweening sort of men, that thought their own heads as fit for a Crown as *Saul*, scornfully despis'd him, yet God *touch'd* the hearts of a band of men, to follow and adhere to him, *1 Sam. 10. 26, 27.* When the Anti-Christian Whore shall be ripe for destruction, God shall *put it into the Heart* of the ten Horns or Kings, *to hate the Whore, burn her with Fire, and falsify her Will.* *Rev. 17. 16, 17.* He *fashions the Hearts* alike, and tunes one string to answer another, and both to answer his own design. *Psal. 33. 15.* And while men seem to gratifie their own ambition and malice, they execute the Will of God by his secret touch upon their Spirits, guiding their inclinations, to serve the glorious manifestation of his Truth. While the *Jews* would in a reproachful disgrace to Christ, Crucifie two Thieves with him, to render him more incapable to have any followers; they accomplish a Prophecie, and brought to light a mark of the *Messiah*, whereby he had been character'd in one of their Prophets; *Isaiah 53. 12.* That he should be *numbered among Transgressors*. He can make a man of not willing, willing; the wills of all men are in his hand. i. e. under the power of his Scepter, to retain, or let go upon this or that Errand, to bend this or that way; as Water is carried by Pipes, to what house or place the owner of it is pleas'd to order. *Prov. 21. 1. The Kings Heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the Rivers of waters he turns it, whithersoever he will,* without any limitation. He speaks of the Heart or Princes: Because in regard of their height they seem to be more absolute and impetuous as waters; yet God holds them in his hand, under his dominion, turns them to acts of clemency or severity, like waters, either to overflow and dammage, or to refresh and fructifie. He can convey a *Spirit to them*, or *cut it off* from them. *Psal. 76. 12.* 'Tis with reference to his efficacious power, in graciously turning the Heart of *Paul*, that the Apostle breaks off his discourse off the story of his conversion, and breaks out into a magnifying, and glorifying of God's dominion. *1 Tim. 1. 17. Now unto the King eternal, &c. be Honour and Glory for ever and ever.* Our Hearts are more subject to the divine Sovereignty, than our members in their motions are subject to our own wills. As we can move our hand East or West to any quarter of the World, so can God bend our Wills to what mark he pleases. The *second Cause* in every motion depends upon the *first*, and that will, being a second Cause, may be further'd, or hinder'd in its inclinations or executions by God; he can bend or unbend it, and change it from one actual inclination to another. 'Tis as much under his Authority and Power to move, or hinder, as the vast engine of the Heavens is in its motion or standing still, which he can effect by a word. The work depends upon the workman; the Clock upon the Artificer for the motions of it.

3. His dominion is seen *in regard of Terror or Comfort*. The Heart or Conscience is Gods special Throne on Earth, which he hath reserv'd to himself, and never indulg'd humane Authority to sit upon it. He solely orders this in ways of conviction or Comfort. He can flash terror into mens Spirits in the midst of their Earthly jollities, and put death into the pot of Conscience, when they are boiling up themselves in a high pitch of worldly delights; and can raise mens Spirits above the sense of torment under Racks, and Flames. He can draw a hard Writing not only in the outward Chamber but the inward Closet, bring the Rack into the inwards of a Man. None can infuse Comfort, when he writes bitter



bitter thing; nor can any fill the heart with Gall, when he drops in Honey. Men may order outward duties, but they cannot unlock the Conscience, and constrain men, to think them duties, which they are forced by humane Laws, outwardly to act. And as the Laws of earthly Princes are bounded by the outward man, so do their executions and punishments reach no further than the case of the Body. But God can run upon the inward man as a Gyant, and inflict wounds and gashes there.

5. Proposition, *'Tis an Eternal Dominion.* In regard of the exercise of it, it was not from Eternity: Because there was not from Eternity any Creature under the Government of it; but in regard of the foundation of it, his Essence, his Excellency, 'tis Eternal: As God was from eternity Almighty, but there was no exercise or manifestation of it, till he began to Create. Men are Kings only for a time, their lives expire like a Lamp, and their dominion is extinguish'd with their lives; they hand their Empire by Succession to others, but many times it is snapt off, before they are cold in their Graves. How are the famous Empires of the *Chaldeans, Medes, Persians, and Greeks* mouldred away; and their place knows them no more? And how are the wings of the *Roman Eagle* cut, and that Empire which overspread a great part of the World, hath lost most of its Feathers, and is confin'd to a narrower compass. The dominion of God flourisheth from one Generation to another. *He sits King for ever, Psa. 29. 10.* His *session* signifies the establishment and *for ever* the duration, and he *sits now*, his Sovereignty is as absolute, as powerful as ever. How many Lords and Princes hath this or that Kingdom had? In how many Families hath the Scepter lodg'd? When as God hath had an uninterrupted dominion. As he hath been always the same in his Essence, he hath been always glorious in his Sovereignty. Among men, he that is Lord to day, may be stript of it to morrow; the dominions in the World vary, he that is a Prince may see his Royalty upon the Wings, and feel himself laden with Fetters. And a Prisoner may be *lifted from his Dungeon* to a Throne. But there can be no diminution of God's Government; *His Throne is from Generation to Generation. Lament. 5. 19.* It cannot be shaken. His Scepter like *Aarons Rod* is always green. It cannot be wrested out of his hands; none rais'd him to it: None therefore can depose him from it; it bears the same splendor in all humane affairs, he is an eternal, an *immortal King. 1 Tim. 1. 17.* As he is eternally Mighty, so he is eternally Sovereign, and being an eternal King, he is a King that gives not a momentary and perishing, but a durable and Everlasting Life to them that obey him: A durable and eternal punishment to them that resist him.

### III. Wherein this Dominion and Sovereignty consists, and how 'tis manifested;

1. *The first act of sovereignty is the making Laws.* This is Essential to God; no Creatures Will can be the first rule to the Creature but only the Will of God. He only can prescribe man his duty, and establish the rule of it; hence the Law is call'd the *Royal Law. James 2. 8.* It being the first and clearest manifestation of Sovereignty; as the power of Legislation is of the Authority of a Prince. Both are joyn'd together in. *Isaiah 53. 22. The Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King.* Legislative power being the great mark of Royalty. God as a King enacts Laws by his own proper Authority, and his Law is a Declaration of his own Sovereignty, and of mens moral subjection to him, and dependance on him.

\* His Sovereignty doth not appear so much in his promises as in his precepts: A man's power over another is not discovered by promising: For a promise doth not suppose the promiser either superior or inferior to the person, to whom the promise is made. 'Tis not an exercising Authority over another, but over a man's self. No man forceth another to the acceptance of his promise, but only proposeth, and encourageth to an embracing of it. But commanding supposeth always an Authority in the person giving the precept. It obligeth the person, to whom the command is directed. A promise obligeth the person by whom the promise is made. God by his command binds the Creature,

\* Suarez. de  
Legib. p. 23.

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by his promise he binds himself. He stoops below his Sovereignty, to lay obligations upon his own Majesty. By a precept he binds the Creature, by a promise he encourageth the Creature to an observance of his precept. What Laws God makes, man is bound by vertue of his Creation to observe; that respects the Sovereignty of God. What promises God makes, man is bound to believe, but that respects the faithfulness of God. God manifested his dominion more to the *Jews* than to any other people in the World; He was their Lawgiver, both as they were a Church and a Commonwealth. As a Church, he gave them Ceremonial Laws, for the regulating their Worship. As a State, he gave them Judicial Laws, for the ordering their Civil Affairs; and as both he gave them Moral Laws, upon which both the Laws of the Church, and State were founded.

This dominion of God in this regard will be manifest.

1. *In the Supremacy of it.* The sole power of making Laws doth originally reside in him. *James 4. 12. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save, and to destroy.* By his own Law he Judges of the eternal States of Men, and no Law of man is obligatory, but as it is agreeable to the Laws of this supream Lawgiver, and pursuant to his righteous rules for the Government of the World. The power that the Potentates of the World have to make Laws, is but derivative from God. If their dominion be from him, as it is: For *by him Kings Reign. Prov. 8. 15.* Their Legislative power which is a prime flower of their Sovereignty, is deriv'd from him also. And the *Apostle* resolves it into this original, when he orders us, to be *subject to the higher powers not only for wrath but for Conscience sake. Rom. 13. 5.* Conscience in its operations solely respects God: And therefore when it is exercised as the principle of Obedience to the Laws of Men, 'tis not with a respect to them singly considered, but as the Majesty of God appears in their station and in their decrees. This power of giving Laws was acknowledged by the Heathen, to be solely in God by way of original: And therefore the greatest Lawgivers among the Heathen pretended their Laws to be received from some Deity, or supernatural power by special Revelation; now whither they did this seriously, acknowledging themselves this part of the dominion of God: (For it is certain, that what soever just orders were issued out by Princes in the World, was by the secret influence of God upon their Spirits. *Prov. 8. 15. By me Princes Decree Justice,* by the secret conduct of Divine Wisdom) or whither they pretended it only as a publick Engine, to enforce upon people the observance of their Decrees, and gain a greater credit to their Edicts, yet this will result from it, that the people in general entertain'd this common notion, that God was the great Lawgiver of the World. The first founders of their Societies could never else have so absolutely gain'd upon them by such a pretence. There was always a Revelation of a Law from the mouth of God in every age: The exhortation of *Eliphaz* to *Job, Job 22. 22.* Of receiving a Law from the mouth of God at the time before the Moral Law was publisht, had been a vain exhortation, had there been no revelation of the mind of God in all Ages.

2. The dominion of God is manifest *in the extent of his Laws.* As he is the Governour and Sovereign of the whole World, so he Enacts Laws for the whole World. One Prince cannot make Laws for another, unless he makes him his Subject by right of conquest. *Spain* cannot make Laws for *England*, or *England* for *Spain*. But God having the supream Government as King over all, is a Lawgiver to all, to irrational, as well as rational Creatures. *The Heavens have their Ordinances. Job 38. 33.* All Creatures have a Law imprinted on their beings. Rational Creatures have Divine Statutes Copied in their heart. For men it is clear. *Rom. 2. 14.* Every Son of *Adam* at his coming into the World, brings with him a Law in his nature, and when reason clears it self up from the Clouds of sense, he can make some difference between Good and Evil; discern something of fit and just. Every man finds a Law within him, that checks him, if he  
offends



offend in. None are without a legal indictment, and a legal Executioner within them: God himself was the Author of this as a Sovereign Lord, in establishing a Law in man at the same time, wherein as an Almighty Creator he imparted a being. This Law proceeds from God's general power of governing, as he is the Author of nature, and binds not barely as it is the reason of man, but by the Authority of God, as it is a Law engraven on his Conscience. And no doubt but a Law was given to the *Angels*, God did not Govern those intellectual Creatures as he doth brutes, and in a way inferior to his rule of Man. Some sinned, all might have sinned in regard of the changeableness of their nature. Sin cannot be but against some rule: *Where there is no Law, there is no Transgression*; what that Law was, is not reveal'd, but certainly it must be the same in part with the Moral Law, so far as it agreed with their spiritual natures; a love to God, a Worship of him, and a love to one another in their Societies and Persons.

3. The dominion of God is manifest in the reason of some Laws, which seem to be nothing else than purely his own Will. Some Laws there are for which a reason may be rendered from the nature of the thing enjoined, as to Love, Honour and Worship God. For others, none but this, God will have it to, such was that positive Law to *Adam* of not eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Gen. 2. 17. which was merely an asserting his own dominion, and was different from that Law of Nature God had written in his heart. No other reason of this seems to us but a resolve, to try mans Obedience in a way of absolute Sovereignty, and to manifest his right over all Creatures, to reserve what he pleased to himself, and permit the use of what he pleased to man, and to signify to man, that he was to depend on him, who was his Lord, and not on his own will. There was no more hurt in it self for *Adam* to have eaten of that, than of any other in the Garden; the Fruit was pleasant to the Eye, and Good for Food, but God would shew the right he had over his own goods, and his Authority over man, to reserve, what he pleases of his own Creation from his touch; that since man could not claim a propriety in any thing, he was to meddle with nothing but by the leave of his Sovereign; either discovered by a special or general License. Thus God shewed himself the Lord of Man, and that man was but his Steward, to act by his Orders. If God had forbidden man the use of more Trees in the Garden, his command had been just: Since as a Sovereign Lord he might dispose of his own Goods; and when he had granted him the whole compass of that pleasant Garden, and the whole World round about for him and his posterity, it was a more tolerable exercise of his dominion, to reserve this one Tree, as a mark of his Sovereignty, when he had left all others to the use of *Adam*. He reserv'd nothing to himself as Lord of the Manour but this, and *Adam* was prohibited nothing else but this one, as a sign of his subjection. Now for this no reason can be rendered by any man but merely the Will of God, this was merely a fruit of his Dominion.

For the moral Laws a reason may be rendered; to Love God, hath reason to enforce it besides God's Will, viz. The Excellency of his Nature, and the greatness and multitudes of his benefits. To love our Neighbour, hath enforcing reasons, viz. the Conjunction in blood, and the preservation of humane Society, and the need we may stand in of their love our selves. But no reason can be assign'd of this positive command about the Tree of knowledge of good and evil but merely the pleasure of God. It was a branch of his pure dominion, to try mans Obedience, and a mark of his Goodness to try it by so easie and light a precept, when he might have extended his Authority further. Had not God given this or the like order, his absolute dominion had not been so conspicuous. 'Tis true, *Adam* had a Law of Nature in him, whereby he was obliged to perpetual Obedience, and though it was a part of God's dominion to implant it in him, yet his supream dominion over the Creatures had not been so visible to man, but by this, or a precept of the same kind. What was commanded, or



prohibited by the Law of Nature, did bespeak a comeliness in it self, it appear'd Good or Evil to the reason of man, but this was neither Good nor Evil in it self, it receiv'd its sole Authority from the absolute Will of God, and nothing could result from the fruit it self, as a reason why man should not tast it, but only the sole Will of God. And as God's dominion was most conspicuous in this precept, so man's obedience had been most eminent in observing it. For in his obedience to it, nothing but the sole power and Authority of God, which is the proper rule of obedience, could have been respected, not any reason from the thing it self.

To this we may referre some other Commands, as that of appointing the time of solemn and public Worship, the *seventh day*; though the Worship of God be a part of the Law of Nature, yet the appointing a particular day, wherein he would be more formally and solemnly acknowledged than on other days, was ground'd upon his absolute right of Legislation: For there was nothing in the time it self, that could render that day more Holy than another, though God respected his *finishing the work of Creation* in his institution of that day. *Gen. 2. 3.* Such were the *Ceremonial Commands* of Sacrifices, and Washings under the Law, and the Commands of Sacraments under the Gospel: The one to last till the *first Coming* of Christ, and his Passion; the other to last till the *second Coming* of Christ, and his Triumph. Thus he made natural and unavoidable uncleannesses to be sins, and the touching a dead Body to be pollution, which in their own nature were not so.

4. The Dominion of God appears in the *Moral Law*, and his Majesty in publishing it. As the *Law of Nature* was writ by his own Fingers in the Nature of man, so it was Engraven by his own finger in the *Tables of Stone*; *Exod. 31. 18.* Which is very emphatically exprest, to be a mark of God's Dominion. *Exodus 32. 16.* And the *Tables were the work of God, and the writing, was the writing of God Engraven upon the Tables*; and when the *first Tables* were broken, though he orders *Moses* to frame the *Tables*, yet the *writing of the Law*, he reserves to himself. *Exod. 34. 1.* 'Tis not said of any part of the *Scripture*, that it was writ by the finger of God, but only of the *Decalogue*; herein he would have his Sovereignty eminently appear; it was publish'd by God in state, with a numerous attendance of his *heavenly Militia*, *Deut. 32. 2.* And the Artillery of Heaven was shot off at the solemnity: And therefore it is call'd a *fiery Law*, coming from his right hand, i. e. His Sovereign power. It was publisht with all the marks of supream Majesty.

5. The Dominion of God appears in the *Obligation of the Law, which reacheth the Conscience*. The Laws of every Prince are fram'd for the outward conditions of Men; they do not by their Authority bind the Conscience; and what obligations do result from them upon the Conscience, is either from their being the same immediately with divine Laws, or as they are according to the just power of the Magistrate, founded on the Law of God. Conscience hath a protection from the King of Kings, and cannot be arrested by any humane power. God hath given man but an Authority over half the man, and the worst half too, that which is of an Earthly original; but reserved the Authority over the better and more heavenly half to himself. The Dominion of earthly Princes extends only to the bodies of men, they have no Authority over the Soul, their punishment and rewards cannot reach it: And therefore their Laws by their single Authority cannot bind it, but as they are co-incident with the Law of God, or as the equity of them is subservient to the preservation of humane Society, a regular and Righteous thing, which is the Divine end in Government, and so they bind, as they have a relation to God as the supream Magistrate. The Conscience is only intelligible to God in its secret motions; and therefore only guidable by God; God only pierceth into the Conscience by his Eye: And therefore only can conduct it by his Rule. Man cannot tell whither we embrace this Law in our Heart and Conscience.



ences, or only in appearance. *He only can Judge it. Luke 12. 3, 4.* And therefore he only can impose Laws upon it; 'tis out of the reach of humane penal Authority, if their Laws be transgress'd inwardly by it. Conscience is a Book in some sort as Sacred as the Scripture, no addition can be lawfully made to it, no subtraction from it. Men cannot diminish the duty of Conscience, or raze out the Law, God hath stamp't upon it. They cannot put a *superseas* to the Writ of Conscience, or stop its mouth with a *Noli Prosequi*. They can make no addition by their Authority, to bind it; 'tis a flower in the Crown of Divine Sovereignty only.

2. His Sovereignty appears *in a power of dispensing with his own Laws*. 'Tis as much a part of his Dominion, to dispense with his Laws, as to enjoin them; he only hath the power of relaxing his own right, no Creature hath power to do it; that would be to usurp a superiority over him, and order above God himself. Repealing or dispensing with the Law is a branch of Royal Authority. 'Tis true, God will never dispense with those Moral Laws, which have an eternal reason in themselves, and their own nature; as for a Creature, to Fear, Love, and Honour God: this would be to dispense with his own Holiness, and the Righteousness of his Nature, to sully the purity of his own Dominion; it would write folly upon the first Creation of man after the Image of God, by writing mutability upon himself, in framing himself after the corrupted Image of man. It would null and frustrate the excellency of the Creature, wherein the Image of God mostly shines; nay it would be to dispense with a Creature being a Creator, and make him independent upon the Sovereign of the World in Moral Obedience.

But God hath a right to dispense with the ordinary Laws of Nature in the inferior Creatures; he hath a power to alter their course by an arrest of Miracles, and make them come short, or go beyond his Ordinances established for them. He hath a right to make the Sun stand still, or move backward; to bind up the Womb of the Earth, and barr the influences of the Clouds, bridle in the rage of the fire, and the fury of Lions, make the liquid waters stand like a Wall, or pull up the dam, which he hath set to the Sea, and command it to overflow the neighbouring Countries. He can dispense with the natural Laws of the whole Creation, and strain every string beyond its ordinary pitch.

Positive Laws he hath revers'd; as the Ceremonial Law given to the Jews: The very nature indeed of that Law requir'd a repeal, and fell of Course; when that, which was intended by it, was come, it was of no longer significancy; as before it was a useful shadow, it would afterwards have been an empty one. Had not God took away this, Christianity had not in all likelihood been propagated among the Gentiles. This was the *partition wall between Jews and Gentiles, Eph. 2. 14.* Which made them a distinct Family from all the World, and was the occasion of the enmity of the Gentiles against the Jews. When God had by bringing in, what was signified by those Rites, declar'd his decree for the ceasing of them; and when the Jews, fond of those Divine Institutions, would not allow him the right of repealing, what he had the Authority of enacting, he resolv'd for the asserting his Dominion, to bury them in the ruins of the Temple and City, and make them for ever incapable of practising the main and Essential parts of them: For the Temple being the pillar of the legal Service, by demolishing that, God hath taken away their right of sacrificing, it being peculiarly annex't to that place; they have no Altar dignified with a fire from Heaven to consume their sacrifices, no legal High Priest to offer them, God hath by his Providence chang'd his own Law, as well as by his precept.

Yea he hath gone higher by vertue of his Sovereignty, and chang'd the whole scene and methods of his Government after the fall, from King Creator to King Redeemer. He hath revok'd the Law of works as a Covenant, releas'd the penalty of it from the believing sinner, by transferring it upon the surety, who interpos'd himself by his own will and divine designation. He hath establish'd another



## A Discourse upon

another Covenant upon other promises in a higher root, with greater Priviledges and easier terms. Had not God had this right of Sovereignty, not a man of *Adam's* posterity could have been blessed; he, and they, must have lain groaning under the misery of the fall, which had render'd both himself and all in his Loya, unable to observe the Terms of the first Covenant.

He hath, as some speak, dispens'd with his own Moral Law in some cases; in commanding *Abraham* to Sacrifice his Son, his only Son, a Righteous Son, a Son whereof he had the promise, that *in Isaac should his seed be call'd*; yet he was commanded to Sacrifice him by the right of his absolute Sovereignty as the supreme Lord of the Lives of his Creatures from the highest *Angel* to the lowest Worm, whereby he bound his Subjects to this Law, not himself. Our Lives are due to him, when he calls for them, and they are a just forfeit to him, at the very moment we sin, at the very moment we come into the World by reason of the venom of our nature against him, and the disturbance the first sin of man (whereof we are inheritors) gave to his Glory. Had *Abraham* sacrific'd his Son of his own head, he had sinn'd, yea in attempting it; but being Authoriz'd from Heaven, his act was Obedience to the Sovereign of the World, who had a power to dispense with his own Law; and with this Law he had before dispens'd, in the case of *Cain's* Murder of *Abel* as to the immediate punishment of it with death, which indeed was settled afterwards by his Authority, but then omitted because of the paucity of men, and for the peopling the World; but settled afterwards, when there was almost, though not altogether, the like occasion of omitting it for a time.

### 3. His Sovereignty appears in punishing the Transgression of his Law.

1. *This is a branch of Gods Dominion as Lawgiver.* So was the vengeance God would take upon the *Amalekites*. *Exod. 17. 16. The Lord hath sworn, that the Lord will have War.* The Hebrew is, *the hand upon the Throne of the Lord*, as in the margent. As a Lawgiver he saves or destroys. *James 4. 12.* He acts according to his own Law, in a congruity to the sanction of his own precepts; though he be an Arbitrary Lawgiver, appointing what Laws he pleases, yet he is not an Arbitrary Judge. As he commands nothing, but what he hath a right to command, so he punisheth none, but whom he hath a right to punish, and with such punishment as the Law hath denounced. All his acts of Justice and inflictions of Curses, are the effects of this Sovereign Dominion. *Psal. 29. 10. He sits King upon the Flouds.* Upon the deluge of Waters wherewith he drown'd the World, say some. 'Tis a right belonging to the Authority of Magistrates, to pull up the infectious weeds, that corrupt a Common-Wealth. 'Tis no less the right of God as the Lawgiver and Judge of all the Earth, to subject Criminals to his vengeance, after they have rendered themselves abominable in his Eyes, and carried themselves unworthy Subjects of so great and glorious a King. The first name whereby God is made known in Scripture, is *Elohim*. *Gen. 1. 1. In the beginning God Created the Heaven and Earth.* A name which signifies his power of judging in the opinion of some Criticks; from him it is deriv'd to earthly Magistrates; their Judgment is said therefore to be the *Judgement of God*, *Dent. 1. 17.* When Christ came, he propos'd this great motive of Repentance from the *Kingdom of Heaven being at hand*; the Kingdom of his Grace, whereby to invite men; the Kingdom of his Justice in the punishment of the neglecters of it, whereby to terrifie men. Punishments as well as Rewards belong to Royalty; it issued accordingly; those that believ'd and repented, came under his gracious Scepter; those that neglected, and rejected it, fell under his Iron Rod. *Jerusalem* was destroy'd, the Temple demolish'd, the Inhabitants lost their lives by the edge of the Sword, or linger'd them out in the chains of a miserable Captivity. This term of Judge which signifies a Sovereign right to govern and punish Delinquents, *Abraham* gives him, when he came, to root out the People of *Sodom*, and make them the examples of his vengeance. *Gen. 18. 25.*



2. *Punishing the Transgressions of his Law; This is necessary branch of Dominion.* His Sovereignty in making Laws would be a trifle, if there were not also an Authority to vindicate those Laws from Contempt and Injury; he would be a Lord only spurn'd at by Rebels. Sovereignty is not preserved without Justice. When the *Psalmist* speaks of the Majesty of God's Kingdom, he tells us, that *Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne.* *Psal.* 97. 1, 2. These are the Engines of Divine dignity, which render him glorious and majestic. A Legislative power would be trampled on without executive; by this the reverential apprehensions of God are preserved in the World. He is known to be Lord of the World, by the *Judgements which he executes.* *Psal.* 9. 16. When he seems to have lost his dominion, or given it up in the World, he recovers it by punishment. When he takes some away *with a Whirlwind, and in his Wrath,* the natural consequence men make of it, is this, *Surely there is a God that judgeth the Earth.* *Psal.* 58. 9. 11. He reduceth the Creature by the lath of his judgements, that would not acknowledge his Authority in his precepts. Those sins which disown his Government in the Heart and Conscience, as Pride, inward blasphemy, &c. he hath reserved a time hereafter to reckon for. He doth not presently shoot his arrows into the marrow of every delinquent, but those sins which traduce his Government of the World, and tear up the Foundations of humane converse, and a publick respect to him, he reckons with particularly here, as well as hereafter, that the Life of his Sovereignty might not always faint in the World.

3. *This of punishing was the second discovery of his dominion in the World.* His first act of Sovereignty was the giving a Law, the next, his appearance in the State of a judge. When his orders were violated, he rescues the honour of them by an execution of Justice. He first judg'd the Angels, punishing the evil ones for their crime; the first Court he kept among them as a Governour, was to give them a Law, the second Court he kept, was as a Judge trying the Delinquents, and adjudging the Offenders, to be *reserved in Chains of darkness* till the final Execution. *Jude* 6. And at the same time probably he confirmed the good ones in their obedience by Grace. So the first discovery of his dominion to man, was the giving him a precept, the next was the inflicting a punishment for the breach of it. He summons *Adam* to the Bar, indicts him for his Crime, finds him guilty by his own Confession, and passeth sentence on him, according to the rule he had before acquainted him with.

4. *The means whereby he punisheth shews his dominion.* Sometimes he musters up *Hail and Mildew*, sometimes he sends regiments of wild Beasts; so he threatens *Israel.* *Levit.* 26. 22. Sometimes he sends out a party of Angels, to beat up the quarters of men, and make a carnage among them. *2 King* 19. 35. Sometimes he mounts his *Thundring* battery, and shoots forth his Ammunition from the Clouds; as against the *Philistines,* *1 Sam.* 7. 10. Sometimes he sends the slightest Creatures to shame the Pride, and punish the sin of man; as *Lice, Frogs, Locusts*; as upon the *Egyptians,* the 8, 9, 10. chap. of *Exodus*.

2. *This Dominion is manifested by God as a proprietor and Lord of his Creatures and his own Goods.*

And this is evident.

1. *In the choice of some persons from Eternity.* He hath set a part some from Eternity, wherein he will display the invincible efficacy of his Grace, and thereby infallibly bring them to the fruition of Glory. *Eph.* 1. 4, 5. *According as he hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we should be Holy and without blame before him in Love, having Predestinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.* Why doth he write some names in the *Book of Life*, and leave out others? why doth he enroll some, whom he intends to make *Denizens of Heaven*, and refuse to put others in his register? The *Apostle* tells us, 'tis the pleasure of his Will. You may render a reason for many of God's actions, till you come to this the top and Foundation



dation of all; and under what head of reason can man reduce this act but to that of his Royal Prerogative? Why doth God save some, and condemn others at last? Because of the Faith of the one, and unbelief of the other. Why do some men believe? Because God hath not only given them the means of Grace, but accompanied those means with the efficacy of his Spirit. Why did God accompany those means with the efficacy of his Spirit in some, and not in others? Because he had decreed by Grace, to prepare them for Glory. But why did he decree, or choose some, and not others? Into what will you resolve this but into his sovereign pleasure? Salvation and Condemnation at the last upshot, are acts of God as the Judge conformable to his own Law of giving life to believers, and inflicting death upon unbelievers; for those a reason may be rendered; but the choice of some and preterition of others, is an act of God as he is a sovereign Monarch, before any Law was actually transgressed, because not actually given. When a Prince redeems a Rebel, he acts as a Judge according to Law; but when he calls some out, to pardon, he acts as a sovereign by a Prerogative above Law; into this the *Apostle* resolves it. *Rom. 9. 13. 15.* When he speaks of Gods loving *Jacob*, and hating *Esau*, and that before they had done either good or evil: It is, *Because God will have Mercy, on whom he will have Mercy, and Compassion on whom he will have Compassion.* Though the first scope of the *Apostle* in the beginning of the Chapter, was to declare the reason of God's rejecting the Jews, and calling in the Gentiles; had he only intended to demolish the pride of the Jews, and flat their opinion of merit, and aim'd no higher than that Providential act of God; he might, convincingly enough to the reason of men, have argued from the Justice of God, provoked by the obstinacy of the *Jews*, and not have had recourse to his absolute Will; but since he asserts this latter, \* the strength of his argument seems to lie thus; if God by his absolute sovereignty may resolve, and fix his love upon *Jacob* and estrange it from *Esau*, or any other of his Creatures before they have done good or evil, and man have no ground to call his infinite Majesty to account, may he not deal thus with the *Jews*, when their demerit would be a barr to any complaints of the Creature against him? If God were considered here in the quality of a Judge, it had been fit to have considered the matter of Fact in the Criminal; but he is considered as a *Sovereign*, rendering no other reason of his action but his own Will, *whom he will he hardens*, ver. 18. And then the *Apostle* concludes. Ver. 20. *Who art thou, O Man, that repliest against God?* If the reason drawn from Gods Sovereignty, doth not satisfy in this enquiry, no other reason can be found, wherein to acquiesce? For the last condemnation there will be sufficient reason to clear the Justice of his proceedings. But in this case of Election, no other reason but what is alledg'd, *viz. The Will of God*, can be thought of, but what is liable to such knotty exceptions, that cannot well be untied.

\* *Arnyald.*  
dissert. p. 101,  
102.

1. *It could not be any merit in the Creature, that might determine God to choose him.* If the decree of Election falls not under the merit of Christ's passion, as the procuring cause, it cannot fall under the merit of any part of the corrupted mass. The decree of sending Christ, did not precede, but follow'd in order of nature the determination of choosing some. When men were chosen as the subjects for Glory, Christ was chosen as the means, for the bringing them to Glory, *Eph. 1. 4. Chosen us in him, and predestinated us to the Adoption of children by Jesus Christ.* The choice was not merely in Christ, as the moving cause; that the *Apostle* asserts, to be *the good pleasure of his will*; but in Christ, as the means of conveying to the chosen Ones the fruits of their Election. What could there be in any man, that could invite God to this act, or be a cause of distinction of one branch of *Adam* from another? Were they not all hew'd out of the same Rock, and tainted with the same corruption in blood? Had it been possible to invest them with a power of merit at the first, had not that venom contracted in their nature, degraded all of power for the future? What merit was there in any but of wrathfull punishment, since they were all considered as Criminals, and the cursed brood of an ungrateful Rebel? what dignity can there be in the nature of the purest part of clay, to be made a Vessel of Honour, more than in another part of Clay as pure as that which was form'd



form'd into a Vessel for mean and fordid use? What had any one to move his mercy more than another; since they were all Children of wrath, and equally dawb'd with Original guilt and filth? Had not all an equal proportion of it, to provoke his Justice? What merit is there in one dry bone more than another, to be inspir'd with the breath of a spiritual life? Did not all lie wallowing in their own filthy blood, and what could the steam, and noysomness of that, deserve at the hands of a pure Majesty, but to be cast into a sink furthest from his sight? Were they not all considered in this deplorable posture with an equal proportion of poyson in their nature, when God first took his pen, and singled out some Names, to write in the Book of life? It could not be merit in any one peice of this abominable Mass, that should stir up that resolution in God, to set apart this person for a Vessel of Glory, while he permitted another to putrifie in his own gore. He loved *Jacob*, and hated *Esau*, though they were both parts of the common Mass, the Seed of the same Loyns, and lodg'd in the same Womb.

2. *Nor could it be any foresight of works to be done in time by them, or of Faith, that might determine God to choose them.* What good could he foresee resulting from extream corruption, and a nature alienated from him? What could he foresee of good to be done by them, but what he resolved in his own will, to bestow an ability upon them, to bring forth? His choice of them was to a Holiness, not for a Holiness preceding his determination, *Eph. 1.4.* He hath chosen us, *that we might be Holy* before him, he ordained us *to good works*, not for them, *Eph. 2. 10.* What is a Fruit, cannot be a moving cause of that whereof it is a fruit. Grace is a stream from the spring of electing love; the branch is not the cause of the Root, but the Root of the Branch, nor the stream the cause of the spring, but the spring the cause of the stream. Good works suppose Grace, and a good and right habit in the person; as rational acts suppose reason. Can any man say that the rational acts man performs after his Creation, were a cause why God Created him? This would make Creation and every thing else not so much an act of his will, as an act of his Understanding. God foresaw no rational act in man, before the act of his will to give him reason; nor foresees faith in any, before the act of his will determining to give him Faith. *Eph. 2. 8. Faith is the gift of God.* In the Salvation which grows up from this first purpose of God, he regards not the works we have done, as a principal motive to settle the top-stone of our happiness, but his own purpose, and the Grace given in Christ. *2 Timethy 1. 9. Who hath saved us, and call'd us with a holy Calling, not according to our own works, but according to his own purpose, and Grace, which was given to us in Christ, before the World began.* The honour of our Salvation cannot be challeng'd by our works, much less the honour of the Foundation of it. It was a pure gift of Grace without any respect to any spiritual, much less natural, perfection. Why should the *Apostle* mention that circumstance, when he speaks of God's loving *Jacob*, and hating *Esau*, *when neither of them had done good or evil, Rom. 9. 11.* if there were any foresight of mens works, as the moving cause of his love or hatred? God regarded not the *works* of either as the first cause of his choice, but acted by his own Liberty without respect to any of their actions, which were to be done by them in time. If Faith be the fruit of Election, the prescience of Faith doth not influence the Electing act of God. *Tit. 1. 1.* 'Tis called *the Faith of Gods Elect.* Paul an *Apostle of Jesus Christ according to the Faith of Gods Elect.* i. e. Settled in this Office to bring the Elect of God to Faith. If men be chosen by God upon the foresight of Faith, or not chosen till they have Faith, they are not so much God's Elect, as God their Elect; they choose God by Faith, before God chooseth them by love. It had not been the Faith of Gods Elect, i. e. Of those already chosen, but the Faith of those that were to be chosen by God afterwards. \* E- \* *Dalle in loc.* Election is the cause of Faith, and not Faith the cause of Election. Fire is the cause of heat, and not the heat of Fire; the Sun is the cause of the day, and not the day the cause of the rising of the Sun. Men are not chosen because they beleive, but they beleive because they are chosen: The *Apostle* did ill else, to appropriate that to the Elect, which they had no more interest in by

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vertue of their Election, than the veriest Reprobate in the World. If the foresight of what works might be done by his Creatures, was the motive of his choosing them, why did he not choose the Devils to Redemption, who could have done him better service, by the strength of their Nature, than the whole Mass of *Adam's* posterity?

Well then, there is no possible way to lay the original Foundation of this act of Election, and preterition in any thing but the absolute Sovereignty of God.

Justice or Injustice comes not into consideration in this case. There is no debt, which Justice or Injustice always respects in its acting: If he had pleased, he might have chosen all, if he had pleased, he might have chosen none. It was in his supream power, to have resolved to have left all *Adam's* posterity under the rack of his Justice; if he determined to snatch out any, it was a part of his dominion, but without any injury to the Creatures he leaves under their own guilt. Did he not pass by the *Angels*, and take man? And by the same right of Dominion may he pick out some men from the common Mass, and lay aside others, to bear the punishment of their Crimes. Are they not all his Subjects? All are his Criminals, and may be dealt with at the pleasure of their undoubted Lord and Sovereign? This is a work of arbitrary power: Since he might have chosen none, or chosen all, as he saw good himself. 'Tis at the liberty of the Artificer, to determine his Wood, or Stone to such a figure, that of a Prince or that of a Toad; and his materials have no right to complain of him, since it lies wholly upon his own liberty. They must have little sence of their own vileness and God's infinite excellency above them by right of Creation, that will contend, that God hath a lesser right over his Creatures, than an Artificer over his Wood or Stone. If it were at his liberty whither to redeem Man, or send Christ upon such an undertaking; 'tis as much at his liberty, and the prerogative is to be allow'd him, what persons he will resolve to make capable of enjoying the fruits of that Redemption. One Man was as fit a subject for Mercy as another; as they all lay in their original guilt. Why would not Divine Mercy cast its eye upon this Man, as well as upon his Neighbour? There was no cause in the Creature, but all in God, it must be resolved into his own will.

Yet not into a Will without Wisdom. God did not choose hand over head, and act by meer Will without Reason and Understanding; an infinite Wisdom is far from such a kind of procedure; but the reason of God is inscrutable to us: unless we could understand God, as well as he understands himself; the whole ground lies in God himself, no part of it in the Creature. *Rom. 9. 15, 16. Not in him that Wills, nor in him that Runs, but in God that shews Mercy.* Since God hath revealed no other cause than his will, we can resolve it into no other than his Sovereign Empire over all Creatures. 'Tis not without a stop to our curiosity, that in the same place where God asserts the absolute Sovereignty of his mercy to *Moses*; he tells him he could not see his face. *Exod. 33. 19, 20. I will be Gracious, to whom I will be Gracious:* and he said, *Thou canst not see my face.* The rayes of his infinite Wisdom, are too bright and dazzling for our weakness. The *Apostle* acknowledged not only a Wisdom in this proceeding, but a riches and treasure of Wisdom; not only that but a depth and vastness of those riches of *Wisdom*, but was unable, to give us an Inventory, and Scheme of it. *Rom. 11. 33.* The secrets of his Counsels are too deep for us to wade into; in attempting to know the reason of those acts we should find our selves swallowed up into a bottomless Gulf. Though the understanding be above our capacity, yet the admiration of his Authority and Submission to it are not. *We should cast our selves down at his feet with a full resignation of our selves to his Sovereign pleasure\*.* This is a more comely carriage in a Christian than all the contentious endeavours to measure God by our line.

\* This was Dr. Goodwins Speech when he was in trouble.

2. *In bestowing Grace where he pleases.* God in Conversion and Pardon works not as a natural Agent, putting forth strength to the utmost, which God must do, if he did renew man naturally, as the Sun shines, and the fire burns, which



which always act *ad extremum virium*, unless a Cloud interpose, to eclipse the one, and water to extinguish the other. But God acts as a voluntary Agent, which can freely exert his power, when he please, and suspend it, when he please. Though God be necessarily good, yet he is not necessitated to manifest all the Treasures of his Goodness to every Subject; he hath power to distill his dews upon one part, and not upon another. If he were necessitated to express his Goodness without a liberty, no thanks were due to him. Who thanks the Sun for shining on him, or the fire for warming him? None: Because they are necessary Agents, and can do no other.

What is the reason, he did not reach out his hand to keep all the Angels from sinking, as well as some, or recover them, when they were sunk? What is the reason, he engrafts one man into the true Vine, and lets another remain a wild Olive? Why is not the efficacy of the Spirit always linkt with the motions of the Spirit? Why doth he not mould the Heart into a Gospel frame, when he fills the Ear with a Gospel sound? Why doth he strike off the chains from some, and tear the vail from the Heart, while he leaves others under their natural slavery, and *Ægyptian* darkness? Why do some lie under the bands of death, while another is rais'd to a spiritual life? What reason is there for all this but his absolute Will? The *Apostle* resolves the question, if the question be askt, why he begets one, and not another? Not from the Will of the Creature, but *his own Will* is the determination of one. *James* 1. 18. Why doth he work in one, *to will, and to do*, and not in another? Because of *his good pleasure*, is the answer of another. *Phil.* 2. 13. He could as well new create every one, as he at first created them, and make Grace as universal as Nature and Reason, but it is not his pleasure so to do.

1. 'Tis not from want of strength in himself. The power of God is unquestionably able to strike off the chains of unbelief from all; he could surmount the obstinacy of every child of wrath, and inspire every Son of *Adam* with Faith as well as *Adam* himself. He wants not a virtue superior to the greatest resistance of his Creature; a victorious beam of light might be shot into their understandings, and a flood of Grace might overspread their Wills with one word of his mouth without putting forth the utmost of his power. What hinderance could there be in any created spirit, which cannot be easily pierced into, and new moulded by the Father of Spirits? Yet he only breaths this efficacious virtue into some, and leaves others under that insensibility and hardness which they love, and suffers them to continue in their benighting ignorance, and consume themselves in the embraces of their dear, though deceitful, *Dalilahs*.

He could have conquered the resistance of the *Jews*, as well as chased away the darkness and ignorance of the *Gentiles*. No doubt, but he could overpower the Heart of the most malicious Devil, as well as that of the simplest and weakest man. But the breath of the Almighty Spirit is in his own power, to breathe where he lists. *John* 3. 8. 'Tis at his liberty, whither he will give to any the feeling of the invincible efficacy of his Grace. He did not want strength to have kept man as firm as a Rock against the temptation of Satan, and pour'd in such fortifying Grace, as to have made him impregnable against the powers of Hell, as well as he did secure the standing of the *Angels* against the Sedition of their fellows. But it was his will to permit it to be otherwise.

2. Nor is it from any prerogative in the Creature. He converts not any for their natural perfection: Because he seizeth upon the most ignorant. Nor for their moral perfection: Because he converts the most sinful. Nor for their Civil perfection: Because he turns the most despicable.

1. Not for their natural perfection of knowledge. He opened the minds and hearts of the more ignorant. Were the nature of the *Gentiles* better manur'd than that of the *Jews*, or did the Tapers of their understandings burn clearer? No, the one were skil'd in the Prophecies of the *Messiah*, and might have compared the Predictions

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they own'd with the Actions and Sufferings of Christ, which they were spectators of. He let alone those that had expectations of the *Messiah*, and expectations about the time of Christ's appearance, both grounded upon the Oracles where-with he had intrusted them. The Gentiles were unacquainted with the Prophets, and therefore destitute of the expectations of the *Messiah*. *Eph. 2. 12.* They were *without Christ*. Without any Revelation of Christ, because *aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel and Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, having no hope and without God in the World*, without any knowledge of God, or promises of Christ. The *Jews* might sooner in a way of reason have been wrought upon, than the Gentiles who were ignorant of the Prophets, by whose writings they might have examined the Truth of the *Apostles* Declarations; thus are they refus'd, that were the kindred of Christ according to the Flesh, and the Gentiles that were at a greater distance from him, brought in by God. Thus he catcheth not at the subtle and mighty Devil, who had an original in spiritual nature more like to him, but at weak and simple man.

2. *Not for any Moral perfection:* Because he converts the most Sinful. The Gentiles steep in Idolatry and Superstition. He sow'd more Faith among the *Romans* than in *Jerusalem*, more Faith in a City that was the common Sewer of all the Idolatry of the Nations conquered by them; than in that City which had so signally been own'd by him, and had not practis'd any Idolatry since the *Babylonish* Captivity. He planted Saintship at *Corinth*, a place notorious for the infamous Worship of *Venus*, a Superstition attended with the grossest uncleanness. At *Ephesus*, that presented the whole World with a Cup of Fornication in their Temple of *Diana*. Among the *Colossians*, Votaries to *Cybele* in a manner of Worship attended with beastly and lascivious Ceremonies. And what character had the *Cretians* from one of their own Poets, mentioned by the Apostle to *Titus*, whom he had plac'd among them, to further the progress of the Gospel, but the vilest and most abominable? *Tit. 1. 12.* *Lyars*, not to be credited, *Evil Beasts* not to be associated with, *Slow Bellies* fit for no service. What prerogative was there in the nature of such putrefaction. As much as in that of a Toad to be elevated to the dignity of an Angel. What steam from such Dunghills could be welcome to him, and move him, to cast his eye on them, and sweeten them from Heaven? What treasures of worth were here, to open the treasures of his Grace? Were such filthy snuffs fit of themselves to be kindled by, and become a lodging for a Gospel beam? What invitations could he have from Lying, Beastliness, Gluttony, but only from his own Sovereignty? By this he plucked firebrands out of the fire, while he left straiter and more comely sticks to consume to ashes.

3. *Not for any Civil Perfection:* Because he turns the most despicable. He elevates not nature to Grace upon the account of Wealth, Honour, or any Civil Station in the World; he dispenseth not ordinarily those Treasures to those that the mistaken World foolishly admire, and dote upon, *1 Cor. 1. 26.* *Not many Mighty, not many Noble.* A purple Robe is not usually deckt with this Jewel. He takes more of mouldy Clay, than refin'd dust, to cast into his Image; and lodges his Treasures more in the earthly Vessels, than in the World's Golden ones. He gives out his richest doles, to those that are the scorn and reproach of the World. Should he impart his Grace most to those that abound in wealth, or honour, it had been some foundation for a conception, that he had been mov'd by those vulgarly esteem'd excellencies, to indulge them more than others. And such a conceit languisheth, when we behold the Subjects of his Grace as void originally of any allurements, as they are full of provocations.

Hereby he declares himself free from all Created engagements, and that he is not led by any external motives in the object.

4. *'Tis not from any obligation which lies upon him.* He is indebted to none, oblig'd by all. No man deserves from him any Act of Grace, but every man deserves, what the most deplorable are left to suffer. He is obliged by the Children



dren of wrath to nothing else but showers of wrath, owes no more a debt to fall'n man, than to fall'n Devils, to restore them to their first station by a superlative Grace; how was he more bound, to restore them, than he was to preserve them, to catch them after they fell, than to put a barr in the way of their falling? God as a Sovereign gave Laws to men, and a strength sufficient to keep those Laws. What obligation is there upon God to repair that strength man willfully lost, and extract him out of that condition, into which he voluntarily plung'd himself? What if man sinned by temptation, which is a reason alledged by some? Might not many of the Devils do so too? Though there was a first of them, that sinned without a temptation, yet many of them might be seduced into Rebellion by the Ringleader. Upon that account, he is no more bound, to give Grace to all men, than to Devils. If he promis'd life upon Obedience, he threatned death upon Transgression. By man's disobedience God is quit of his promise, and owes nothing but punishment upon the violation of his Law. Indeed man may pretend to a claim of sufficient strength from him by Creation, as God is the Author of Nature, and he had it; but since he hath extinguish'd it by his sin, he cannot in the least pretend any obligation on God for a new strength. If it be a *peradventure* whither *he will give Repentance*, as it is, *2 Tim. 2.25*. There is no tye in the case; a tye would put it beyond a *peradventure* with a God, that never forfeited his obligation.\* No Husbandman thinks himself oblig'd, to bestow cost and pains, manure and tillage upon one field more than another; though the nature of the ground may require more, yet he is at his liberty whither he will expend more upon one than another. He may let it lie fallow as long as he please. God is less oblig'd, to till, and prune his Creatures, than man is oblig'd to his Field or Trees. If a King proclaim a pardon to a company of Rebels upon the condition of each of them paying such a summe of Money; their Estates before were capable of satisfying the condition, but their Rebellion hath reduc'd them to an indigent condition; the proclamation it self is an act of Grace, the condition requir'd is not impossible in it self, the Prince out of a tenderness to some, sends them that summe of Money, he hath by his Proclamation oblig'd them to pay, and thereby enabled them to answer the condition he requires; the first he doth by a Sovereign Authority, the second he doth by a Sovereign bounty, he was oblig'd to neither of them; punishment was a debt due to all of them; if he would remit it upon condition, he did relax his Sovereign right, and if he would by his largesse make any of them capable to fulfil the condition by sending them presently a sufficient summe to pay the fine, he acted as proprietor of his own goods, to dispose of them in such a quantity to those, to whom he was not oblig'd to bestow a mite.

\* *Claudes* sur la  
parabole des  
Noëes p. 29.

5. *It must therefore be an Act of his meer Sovereignty.* This can only fit arbitrator in every gracious act. Why did he give Grace to *Abel* and not to *Cain*, since they both lay in the same womb, and equally deriv'd from their Parents a taint in their Nature: But that he would show a standing example of his Sovereignty to the future ages of the World in the first posterity of man? Why did he give Grace to *Abraham*, and separate him from his Idolatrous Kindred, to dignifie him to be the root of the *Messiah*? Why did he confine his promise to *Isaac*, and not extend it to *Ismael* the Seed of the same *Abraham* by *Hagar*, or to the Children he had by *Keturah* after *Sarah's* death? What reason can be alledged for this but his Sovereign Will? Why did he not give the fallen Angels a moment of Repentance after their sin, but condemned them to irrevocable pains? Is it not as free for him, to give Grace, to whom he please, as Create what Worlds he please; to form this corrupted clay into his own Image, as to take such a parcel of dust from all the rest of the Creation, whereof to compact *Adam's* body? Hath he not as much jurisdiction over the sinful mass of his Creatures in a new Creation, as he had over the *Chaos* in the old? And what reason can be rendered, of his advancing this part of matter to the nobler dignity of a Star, and leaving that other part, to make up the dark body of the Earth? To compact one part into a glorious Sun, and another part into a hard Rock; but his Royal Prerogative? What is  
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the reason a Prince subjects one Malefactor to punishment, and lifts up another to a place of trust and profit? That *Pharaoh* honoured the Butler with an attendance on his Person, and remitted the Baker to the hands of the Executioner? It was his pleasure. And is not as great a right due to God, as is allow'd to the worms of the Earth? What is the reason he hardens a *Pharaoh*, by a denying him that Grace, which should mollifie him; and allows it to another? 'Tis because *he will*. *Rom. 9. 18. Whom he will he hardens.* Hath not man the liberty to pull up the fluce, and let the water run into what part of the ground he pleases? What is the reason some have not a heart to understand the beauty of his ways? Because the Lord doth *not give* it them. *Dent. 29. 4.* Why doth he not give all his converts an equal measure of his sanctifying Grace, some have Mites, and some have Treasures? Why doth he give his Grace to some, sooner, to some, later, some are inspir'd in their infancy, others not till a full age, and after, some not till they have fallen into some gross sin, as *Paul*; some betimes, that they may do him service, others later, as the Thief upon the Cross, and presently snatcheth them out of the World? Some are weaker, some stronger in nature, some more beautiful, and lovely, others more uncomely and sluggish. 'Tis so in supernaturals. What reason is there for this, but his own will? This is instead of all, that can be assigned on the part of God. He is the free disposer of his own Goods, and as a Father may give a greater portion to one Child than to another. And what reason of complaint is there against God; may not a Toad complain that God did not make it a man, and give it a portion of reason? Or a Fly complain, that God did not make it an Angel, and give it a Garment of Light, had they but any spark of understanding; as well as man complain, that God did not give him Grace, as well as another; Unless he sincerely desir'd it, and then was deny'd it, he might complain of God, though not as Sovereign, yet as a promiser of Grace to them that ask it. God doth not render his Sovereignty formidable; he shuts not up his Throne of Grace from any that seek him; he invites man, his Arms are open, and the Scepter stretched out; and no man continues under the arrest of his Lusts, but he that is unwilling to be otherwise, and such a one hath no reason to complain of God.

3. His Sovereignty is manifest *in disposing the means of Grace to some, not to all.* He hath caus'd the Sun to shine bright in one place, while he hath left others benighted, and deluded by the Devils Oracles. Why do the *Evangelical* dews fall in this or that place, and not in another? Why was the Gospel publisht in *Rome* so soon, and not in *Tartary*? Why hath it been extinguish't in some places, as soon almost as it had been kindled in them? Why hath one place been honoured with the beams of it in one age, and been covered with darkness the next? One Country hath been made a spear for this Star, that directs to Christ, to move in, and afterwards it hath been taken away, and placed in another: Sometimes more clearly it hath shone, sometimes more darkly in the same place, what is the reason of this? 'Tis true something of it may be referred to the Justice of God, but much more to the Sovereignty of God. That the Gospel is publisht latter, and not sooner, the *Apostle* tell us, is *according to the Commandment of the Everlasting God. Rom. 16. 26.*

1. *The means of Grace after the Families from Adam became distinct, were never granted to all the World.* After that fatal breach in *Adam's* Family by the death of *Abel*, and *Cain's* separation, we read not of the means of Grace continued among *Cain's* Posterity; it seems to be continued in *Adam's* sole Family, and not publisht in Societies till the time of *Seth. Gen. 4. 26. Then began men to call upon the Name of the Lord.* It was continued in that Family till the Deluge, which was 1523 years after the Creation according to some, or 1656 years according to others. After that, when the World degenerated, it was communicated to *Abraham*, and settled in the posterity that descended from *Jacob*: Though he left not the World without a witness of himself, and some sprinklings of revelations in other parts, as appears by the book of *Job*, and the discourses of his Friends.



2. *The Jews had this privilege granted them above other Nations to have a clearer Revelation of God.* God separated them from all the World to honour them with the *depositum* of his Oracles. *Rom. 3. 2. To them were committed the Oracles of God.* In which regard all other Nations are said to be *without God*, as being destitute of so great a privilege, *Eph. 2. 12.* The Spirit blew in *Canaan*, when the Lands about it felt not the saving breath of it. *He hath not dealt so with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they have not known them. Psal. 147. 20.* The rest had no warnings from the Prophets, no dictates from Heaven, but what they had by the light of Nature, the view of the works of Creation, and the Administration of Providence, and what remain'd among them of some ancient Traditions deriv'd from *Noah*, which in tract of time were much defaced. We read but of one *Jonah* sent to *Niniveh*, but frequent Alarms to the *Israelites* by a multitude of *Prophets* commissioned by God. 'Tis true, the door of the Jewilli Church was open to what *Profelytes* would enter themselves, and embrace their Religion and Worship; but there was no publick Proclamation made in the World; only God by his miracles in their deliverance from *Egypt* (which could not but be famous among all the Neighbour Nations) declared them to be a people favour'd by Heaven. But the Tradition from *Adam* and *Noah* was not publicly reviv'd by God in other parts, and rais'd from that Grave of forgetfulness, wherein it had lain so long buried. Was there any reason in them for this Indulgence? God might have been as liberal to any other Nation, yea to all the Nations in the World, if it had been his Sovereign pleasure. Any other people were as fit to be entrusted with his Oracles, and be subjects for his Worship as that people; yet all other Nations till the rejection of the *Jews*, because of their rejection of *Christ*, were strangers from the Covenant of Promise. These people were part of the common mass of the World: They had no prerogative in nature above *Adam's* posterity. Were they the extract of an innocent part of his Loins, and all the other Nations drain'd out of his putrefaction? Had the blood of *Abraham*, from whom they were more immediately descended any more precious tincture than the rest of mankind? They as well as other Nations were made of *one Blood.* *Acts 17. 26.* And that corrupted both in the spring and in the Rivulets. Were they better than other Nations, when God first drew them out of their slavery? We have *Joshua's* Authority for it, that they had complied with the *Egyptian Idolatry*, and served other Gods in that place of their servitude. *Joshua 24. 14.* Had they had an abhorrency of the superstition of *Egypt*, while they remain'd there, they could not so soon have erected a Golden Calf for Worship in imitation of the *Egyptian Idols*. All the rest of mankind had as inviting reasons to present God with, as those people had. God might have granted the same privilege to all the World, as well as to them, or denyed it them, and endow'd all the rest of the World with his Statutes: but the enriching such a small Company of people with his Divine showers, and leaving the rest of the World as a barren Wilderness in Spirituals, can be plac'd upon no other account originally than that of his unaccountable Sovereignty of his love to them: There was nothing in them, to merit such high Titles from God as his first born, his peculiar Treasure, the Apple of his Eye. He disclaims any Righteousness in them, and speaks a word sufficient to damp such thoughts in them, by charging them with their wickedness, while he loaded them with his benefits. *Deut. 9. 4. 6.* The Lord gives thee not this Land for thy Righteousness: For thou art a stiff-necked people. It was an act of God's free pleasure, to choose them to be a people to himself. *Deut. 7. 6.*

3. *God afterwards rejected the Jews, gave them up to the hardness of their hearts, and spread the Gospel among the Gentiles.* He hath cast off the Children of the Kingdom, those that had been enrol'd for his subjects for many ages, who seem'd by their descent from *Abraham*, to have a right to the privileges of *Abraham*, and called men from the East and from the West, from the darkest corners of the World, to sit down with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob* in the Kingdom of Heaven. i. e. To partake with them of the promises of the Gospel. *Math. 8. 11.* The people that were accounted accursed by the *Jews*, enjoy the means of  
Grace,



Grace, which have been hid from those, that were once dignified, this 1600 years; that they have neither *Ephod*, nor *Teraphim*, nor sacrifice, nor any true Worship of God among them. *Hos. 3. 4.* Why he should not give them Grace, to acknowledge, and own the person of the *Messiah*, to whom he had made the promises of him for so many successive ages, but let their *heart be fat*, and their *Ears heavy*. *Isaiah 6. 10.* Why the Gospel at length after the Resurrection of Christ should be presented to the Gentiles, not by chance, but pursuant to the resolution, and prediction of God declared by the Prophets, that it should be so in time? Why he should let so many hundreds of years pass over, after the World was peopled, and let the Nations all that while soak in their Idolatrous Customs? Why he should not call the *Gentiles* without rejecting the *Jews*, and bind them both up together in the bundle of Life? Why he should acquaint some people with it, a little after the publishing it in *Jerusalem*, by the descent of the Spirit, and others not a long time after? Some in the first ages of Christianity enjoyed it, others have it not, as those in *America*, till the last age of the World; can be referred to nothing but his Sovereign pleasure.

What merit can be discovered in the *Gentiles*? There is something of Justice in the case of the *Jews* rejection, nothing but Sovereignty in the *Gentiles* reception into the Church. If the *Jews* were bad, the *Gentiles* were in some sort worse: The *Jews* own'd the One true God without mixture of Idols, though they own'd not the *Messiah* in his appearance, which they did in a promise; but the *Gentiles* own'd neither the one, nor the other. Some tell us, it was for the merit of some of their Ancestors. How comes the means of Grace then to be taken from the *Jews*, who had (if any people ever had) meritorious Ancestors for a plea? If the merit of some of their former progenitors were the Cause, what was the reason the debt due to their merit, was not paid to their immediate progeny, or to themselves, but to a posterity so distant from them; and so abominably depraved as the *Gentile* World was, at the day of the Gospel-Sun striking into their *Horizon*? What merit might be in their Ancestors (if any could be supposed in the most refined rubbish,) 'twas so little for themselves, that no Oyl could be spared out of their Lamps for others. What merit their Ancestors might have, might be forfeited by the succeeding Generations. 'Tis ordinarily seen, that what honour a Father deserves in a State for publick Service, may be lost by the Son, forfeited by Treason, and himself attainted.

Or was it out of a foresight that the *Gentiles* would embrace it, and the *Jews* reject it, that the *Gentiles* would embrace it in one place and not in another? How did God foresee it but in his own Grace, which he was resolved to display in one, not in another? It must be then still resolved into his Sovereign pleasure. Or did he foresee it in their wills and nature? What, were they not all one common dross? Was any part of *Adam* by nature better than another? How did God foresee that which was not, nor could be, without his pleasure to give ability and Grace to receive?

Well then, what reason but the Sovereign pleasure of God can be alledged, why Christ forbid the *Apostles* at their first Commission to Preach to the *Gentiles*? *Matth. 10. 15.* But at the second and standing Commission orders them to Preach to every Creature. Why did he put a demurr to the resolutions of *Paul* and *Timothy*, to impart light to *Bithynia*, or Order them to go into *Macedonia*? Was that Country more worthy upon whom lay a great part of the blood of the world shed in *Alexanders* time? *Acts 16. 6, 7, 9, 10.* Why should *Corazin* and *Bethsaida* enjoy those means, that were not granted to the *Tyrians* and *Sidonians*, who might probably have sooner reached out their Arms to welcome it? *Matth. 11. 21.* Why should God send the Gospel into our *Island*, and cause it to flourish so long here, and not send it, or continue it in the furthest *Eastern* parts of the World? Why should the very profession of Christianity possess so small a compass of ground in the world, but five parts in Thirty, the *Mahometans* holding six parts, and the other nineteen overgrown with *Paganism*, where either the Gospel was never planted, or else since rooted up? To whom will you refer this, but to the same



same cause our Saviour doth the Revelation of the Gospel to Babes, and not to the wise, even to his Father? *For so it seemed good in thy sight. Matth. 11. 25, 26. For it was thy good pleasure before thee* (as in the original.) 'Tis at his pleasure whither he will give any a clear Revelation of his Gospel, or leave them only to the light of Nature. He could have kept up the first beam of the Gospel in the promise in all Nations among the Apostacies of *Adam's* posterity, or renewed it in all Nations, when it began to be darkned, as well as he first publish'd it to *Adam* after his fall. But it was his *Sovereign* pleasure, to permit it to be obscur'd in one place, and to keep it lighted in another.

4. His Sovereignty is manifest in the various influences of the means of Grace. He saith to these waters of the Sanctuary, as to the Floods of the Sea, *Hitherto you shall go and no further.* Sometimes they wash away the filth of the flesh, and outward man, but not that of the Spirit. The Gospel Spiritualizeth some, and only moralizeth others: some are by the power of it struck down to Conviction, but not rais'd up to Conversion. Some have only the gleams of it in their Consciences, and others more powerful flashes; some remain in their thick darkness under the beaming of the Gospel every day in their face, and after a long insensibleness are rouz'd by its light and warmth. Sometimes there is such a powerful breath in it, that it levels the haughty imaginations of men, and lays them at its feet, that before strutted against it in the pride of their Hearts. The foundation of this is not in the Gospel it self, which is always the same, nor in the Ordinances which are Channels as found at one time as at another, but divine Sovereignty that Spirits them as he pleaseth, and *blows when and where it lists.* It has sometimes conquered its *thousands*, *Acts 2. 41.* At another time scarce its *tens*; sometimes the Harvest hath been great, when the Labourers have been but few; at another time, it hath been small, when the Labourers have been many. Sometimes whole sheaves, at another time scarce gleanings. The Evangelical Net hath been sometimes full at a cast, and at every cast; at another time many have laboured all night and day too, and catch'd nothing. *Acts 2. 47. The Lord added to the Church daily.* The Gospel Chariot doth not always return with Captives chain'd to the sides of it, but sometimes biur'd and reproached, wearing the marks of Hells spite, instead of imprinting the marks of its own beauty. In *Corinth* it triumph'd over *many* people; *Acts 18. 10.* In *Athens* 'tis mockt, and gathers but a few clusters. *Acts 17. 32. 34.* God keeps the Key of the heart as well as of the Womb. The *Apostles* had a power of publishing the Gospel, and working miracles, but under the Divine conduct. It was an instrumentality *durante bene placito*, and as God saw it convenient. Miracles were not upon every occasion allow'd to them to be wrought, nor success upon every Administration granted to them. God sometimes lent them the Key, but to take out no more Treasure, than was allotted to them.

There is a variety in the time of Gospel operation; some rise out of their Graves of Sin, and Beds of sluggishness at the first appearance of this Sun, others lie snoring longer. Why doth not God Spirit it at one season as well as at another, but set his distinct periods of time; but because he will show his absolute freedom?

And do we not sometimes experiment that after the most solemn preparations of the Heart, we are frustrated of those incomes we expected: Perhaps it was because we thought Divine returns were due to our preparations and God stops up the Channel, and we return dryer than we came, that God may confute our false opinion, and preserve the honour of his own Sovereignty. Sometimes we leap with *John Baptist* in the Womb at the appearance of Christ; sometimes we lie upon a lazy bed when he knocks from Heaven. Sometimes the Fleece is dry and sometimes wet, and God withholds to drop down his dew of the morning upon it. The dews of his word, as well as the droppings of the Clouds belong to his Royalty. Light will not shine into the Heart, though it shine round about us, without the Sovereign order of that God, *who commanded Light to shine out of the Darkness* of the Chaos. *2 Cor. 4. 6.* And is it not seen also in regard of the

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refresh-



refreshing influences of the word? sometimes the strong arguments, and clearest promises prevail nothing towards the quelling black and despairing imaginations, when afterwards we have found them frightened away by an unexpected word, that seem'd to have less vertue in it self, than any that pass'd in vain before it. The reasonings of Wisdom have dropt down like arrow against a brazen wall, when the speech of a weaker person hath found an efficacy. 'Tis God, by his Sovereignty spirits one word and not another. Sometimes a secret word comes in, which was not thought of before, as dropt from Heaven, and gives a refreshing, when emptiness was found in all the rest. One word from the lips of a Sovereign Prince is a greater Cordial than all the Harms of subtilty without it. What is the reason of this variety, but that God would eternally the proof of his own Sovereignty? That as it was a part of his Dominion to Create the beauty of a World, so it is no less, to Create the peace as well as the Grace of the heart. *Isaiah 57. 19. I create the fruit of the lips peace.*

Let us learn from hence to have adoring thoughts of our murmuring fancies against the Sovereignty of God. To acknowledge it with thankfulness in what we have, to implore it with a holy submission, in what we want. To own God as a Sovereign in a way of dependance, is the way to be owned by him as subjects in a way of favour.

5. *His Sovereignty is manifested in giving a great measure of knowledge to some, than to others.* What Parts, Gifts, excellency of Nature any have above others, are Gods donative. *He gives Wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. Dan. 2. 21.* Wisdom the habit, and Knowledge the right use of it in discerning the right nature of objects, and the fitness of means conducing to the end; all is but a beam of Divine Light; and the different degrees of Knowledge in one man above another, are the effects of his Sovereign pleasure. He enlightens not the minds of all men, to know every part of his will; one eats with a doubtful Conscience, another in Faith without any staggering. *Romans 14. 2.* Peter had a desire to keep up Circumcision, not fully understanding the mind of God in the abolition of the Jewish Ceremonies. While Paul was clear in the Truth of that Doctrine. A thought comes into our mind, that like a Sun-beam makes a Scripture Truth visible in a moment, which before we were poring upon without any success; this is from his pleasure. One in the primitive times had the gift of Knowledge, another of Wisdom, one the gift of Prophecy, another of Tongues, one the gift of Healing, another that of discerning Spirits; why this gift to one man, and not to another? Why such a distribution in several Subjects? Because it is his Sovereign pleasure. *The Spirit divides to every man severally as he will, 1 Cor. 12. 11.* Why doth he give Bezaleel and Aholiab the gift of Engraving, and making curious works for the Tabernacle, *Exod. 31. 3.* and not others? Why doth he bestow the Treasures of Evangelical Knowledge upon the meanest of Earthen Vessels, the poor *Galileans*, and neglect the Pharisees stor'd with the Knowledge both of Naturals and Morals? Why did he give to some, and not to others, to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. *Matth. 13. 11.* The reason is implied in the words: *Because it was the mystery of his Kingdom,* and therefore was the act of his Sovereignty. How would it be a Kingdom and Monarchy, if the Governour of it were bound to do what he did? 'Tis to be resolv'd only into the Sovereign right of propriety of his own goods, that he furnisheth Babes with a stock of knowledge, and leaves the Wise and Prudent empty of it. *Matth. 11. 26. Even so Father, for so it seem'd good in thy sight.* Why did he not reveal his mind to Eli a grown man, and in the highest office in the Jewish Church, but open it to Samuel a stripling? Why did the Lord go from the one to the other? Because his motion depends upon his own will. Some are of so dull a constitution, that they are incapable of any impression, like Rocks too hard for a stamp; others like water, you may stamp what you please, but it vanisheth as soon as the Seal is remov'd. 'Tis God forms men as he pleaseth. Some have parts to govern a Kingdom, others scarce brains to conduct their own affairs. One is fit to rule men, and another scarce fit to keep Swine. Some have



have capacious Souls in crazy and deform'd Bodies, others contracted Spirits and heavier minds in a richer and more beautiful case. Why are not all stones alike? some have a more sparkling light, as gems, more orient than pebbles. Some are Stars of first, and others of a less magnitude, others as mean as Glo-worms, a slimy lustre: 'Tis because he is the Sovereign disposer, of what belongs to him; and gives here, as well as at the Resurrection, to one a *Glory of the Sun*, to another that of the *Moon*, and to a third a less, resembling that of a *Star*. 1 Cor. 15. 40. And this God may do by the same right of Dominion, as he exercised, when he endow'd some kinds of Creatures with a greater perfection than others in their Nature. Why may he not as well garnish one man with a greater proportion of gifts, as make a man differ in excellency from the Nature of a Beast? Or frame Angels to a more purely Spiritual Nature than a man? Or make one Angel a *Cherubim*, or *Seraphim* with a greater measure of light than another? Though the foundation of this is his Dominion, yet his wisdom is not uninterested in his Sovereign disposal; he garnisheth those with a greater ability, whom he intends for greater service, than those that he intends for less, or none at all: As an Artificer bestows more labour, and carves a more excellent figure upon those Stones, that he designs for a more honourable place in the building. But though the intending this or that man for service be the motive of laying in a greater provision in him than in others, yet still it is to be referred to his Sovereignty, Since that first act of culling him out for such an end, was the fruit solely of his Sovereign pleasure. As when he resolv'd to make a Creature, actively to glorifie him, in wisdom he must give him reason; yet the making such a Creature was an act of his absolute Dominion.

6. His Sovereignty is manifest in the calling some to a more special service in their Generation. God settles some in immediate Offices of his service, and perpetuates them in those Offices with a neglect of others, who seem to have a greater pretence to them. *Moses* was a great sufferer for *Israel*, the solicitor for them in *Egypt*, and the conductor of them from *Egypt* to *Canaan*; yet he was not chosen to the High Priesthood, but that was an office settled upon *Aaron*, and his posterity after him in a lineal descent; *Moses* was only pitched upon for the present rescue of the Captiv'd *Israelites*, and to be the instrument of Divine Miracles; but notwithstanding all the success he had in his conduct, his faithfulness in his employment, and the transcendent familiarity he had with the great Ruler of the World, his posterity were left in the common level of the Tribe of *Levi* without any special mark of dignity upon them above the rest for all the services of that great man. Why *Moses* for a Temporary Magistracy, *Aaron* for a perpetual Priesthood above all the rest of the *Israelites*, hath little reason but the absolute pleasure of God who distributes his employments, as he pleaseth; and as a Master orders this Servant to do the noblest work, and another to labour in baser offices according to his pleasure? Why doth he call out *David* a Shepherd to sway the Jewish Scepter above the rest of the Brothers, that had a fairer appearance, and had been bred in arms, and enur'd to the Toyls and Watchings of a Camp? Why should *Mary* be the Mother of Christ, and not some other of the same Family of *David* of a more splendid birth, and a nobler education? Though some other reasons may be render'd, yet that which affords the greatest acquiescence, is the Sovereign will of God. Why did Christ choose out of the meanest of the people the *Twelve Apostles*, to be Heralds of his Grace in *Judea* and other parts of the World? And afterwards select *Paul* before *Gamaliel* his Instructor, and others of the *Jews*, as Learned as himself, and advance him to be the most eminent Apostle above the heads of those who had ministred to Christ in the days of his flesh? Why should he preserve Eleven of those he first called, to propagate and enlarge his Kingdom, and leave the other to the employment of shedding his Blood? Why in the times of our reformation he should choose a *Luther* out of a Monastery, and leave others in their superstitious nastiness, to perish in the Traditions of their Fathers? Why set up *Calvin* as a Bulwark of the Gospel, and let others as learned as himself, wallow in the sink of Popery? 'Tis



his pleasure, to do so. The Potter hath power to separate this part of the Clay to form a Vessel for a more publick use, and another part of the Clay to form a Vessel for a more private one. God takes the meanest Clay to form the most excellent and honourable Vessels in his House. As he form'd man, that was to govern the Creatures, of the same Clay and Earth, whereof the Beasts were form'd, and not of that nobler Element of water, which gave birth to the Fish and Birds. So he forms some, that are to do him the greatest service, of the meanest materials, to manifest the absolute right of his Dominion.

7. *His Sovereignty is manifest in the bestowing much Wealth and Honour upon some, and not couchsasing it to the more industrious labours, and attempts of others.* Some are abas'd and others are elevated, some are enricht, and others impoverisht, some scarce feel any Cross, and others scarce feel any comfort in their whole lives. Some sweat and toy, and what they labour for, runs out of their reach; others sit still, and what they wish for, falls into their lap. One of the same Clay hath a Diadem to beautifie his head, and another wants a covering to protect him from the weather. One hath a stately Palace to lodge in, and another is scarce Master of a Cottage where to lay his head. A Scepter is put into one mans hand, and a spade into anothers. A Rich Purple garnisheth one mans body, while another wraps himself in Dunghil rags. The Poverty of some and the Wealth of others is an effect of the divine sovereignty, whence God is said, to be the *Maker of the Poor as well as the Rich*. *Prov. 22. 2.* Not only of their persons but of their conditions. The Earthen Pot of the fulness thereof is his propriety, and he hath as much a right, as *Joseph*, to bestow changes of Rayment, upon what *Benjamins* he please. There is an Election to a greater degree of worldly felicity, as there is an Election of some to a greater degree of supernatural Grace and Glory. As he makes it *rain upon one City, and not upon another*, *Amos 4. 7.* So he causeth prosperity to distil upon the head of one, and not upon another, Crowning some with earthly blessings, while he crowneth others with continual afflictions: For he speaks of himself as a great proprietor, of the Corn that nourisheth us, and the Vine that cheers us, and the Wood that warms us, *Hosea 2. 8, 9.* *I will take away, not your Corn and Vine, but my Corn, my Wine, my Wood.* His right, to dispose of the Goods of every particular person, is unquestionable. He can take away from one, and passe over the propriety to another; thus he devolv'd the right of the *Egyptian* Jewels to the *Israelites*, and bestow'd upon the Captives, what before he had vouchsafed to the oppressors. As every Sovereign state demands the Goods of their Subjects for the publick advantage in a case of exigency, though none of that wealth was gain'd by any publick Office, but by their private industry, and gain'd in a Countrey, not subject to the Dominion of those, that require a portion of them. By this right, he changes strangely the scene of the world, sometimes those that are high, are reduc'd to a mean and ignominious condition, those that are mean, are advanc'd to a state of Plenty and Glory. The Counter which in accounting signifies now but a penny, is presently rais'd up to signifie a pound. The proud Ladies of *Israel* instead of a Girdle of curious needle-work, are brought to make use of a Cord; as the vulgar Translates *Rent*, a rag or list of Cloth. *Isaiah 3. 24.* And Sackcloth for a stomacher instead of Silk. This is the Sovereign act of God, as he is Lord of the world. *Psal. 71. 6, 7.* *Promotion comes neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South, but God is Judge, he pulls down one, and sets up another.* He doth no wrong to any man, if he lets him languish out his days in poverty, and disgrace. If he gives, or takes away, he meddles with nothing, but what is his own more than ours. If he did dispense his benefits equally to all, men would soon think it their due. The inequality and changes preserve the notion of Gods Sovereignty, and correct our natural unmindfulness of it; if there were no changes, God would not be fear'd as the *King of all the Earth*. *Psal. 55. 19.* To this might also be referred his investing some Countries with greater Riches in their Bowels and on the surface. The disposing some in the fruitful and pleasant Regions of *Canaan* or *Italy*, while he settles others in the icy and barren parts of the Northern Climates.



8. His Sovereignty is manifest in the times and seasons of dispensing his Goods. He is Lord of the times when, as well as of the Goods which he doth dispose of to any person; these the Father hath put in his own power. *Acts. 1. 7.* As it was his Sovereign pleasure, to restore the Kingdom to *Israel*, so he would pitch upon the time, when to do it, and would not have his right invaded, so much as by a question out of curiosity. This disposing of opportunities, in many things can be referred to nothing else but his Sovereign pleasure. Why should Christ come at the twilight and evening of the World, at the fulness, and not at the beginning of time? Why he should be from the infancy of the world, so long wrapt up in a promise, and not appear in the flesh till the last times and gray hairs of the world, when so many persons in all Nations had been hurried out of the world without any notice of such a Redeemer? What was this but his Sovereign will? Why the *Gentiles* should be left so long in the *Devils* chains, wallowing in the sink of their abominable superstitions, since God had declar'd his intention by the Prophets, to call multitudes of them, and reject the *Jews*? Why he should deferre it so long, can be referred to nothing but the same cause? What is the reason the vail continues so long upon the heart of the *Jews*, that is promised, one time or other, to be taken off? Why doth God delay the accomplishment of those glorious predictions of the happiness and interest of that people, is it because of the sin of their Ancestors, a reason that cannot bear much weight. If we cast it upon that account, their conversion can never be expected, can never be effected; if for the sins of their Ancestors, is it not also for their own sins? Do their sins grow less in number, or less venomous, or provoking in quality by this delay? Is not their Blasphemy of Christ as malicious, their hatred of him as strong, and rooted, as ever? Do they not as much approve of the bloody act of their Ancestors, since so many ages are past, as their Ancestors did applaud it at the time of the Execution? Have they not the same disposition and will, discovered sufficiently by the scorn of Christ, and of those that profess his Name, to act the same thing over again, were Christ now in the same state in the world, and they invested with the same power of Government? If their Conversion were deferr'd one age after the death of Christ for the sins of their preceding Ancestors, is it to be expected now, since the present generation of the *Jews* in all Countries have the sins of those remote, the succeeding, and their more immediate Ancestors lying upon them. This therefore cannot be the reason, but as it was the Sovereign pleasure of God to foretell his intention, to overcome the stoutness of their hearts, so it is his Sovereign pleasure, that it shall not be performed, till the fulness of the *Gentiles* be come in. *Rom. 11. 25.* As he is Lord of his own Grace, so he is Lord of the Time, when to dispense it. Why did God create the world in 6 days, which he could have erected, and beautified in a moment? Because it was his pleasure so to do. Why did he frame the World, when he did, and not many ages before? Because he is Master of his own work. Why did he not resolve to bring *Israel* to the fruition of *Canaan* till after four hundred years? Why did he draw out their deliverance to so long time after he began to attempt it? Why such a multitude of Plagues upon *Pharoah* to work it, when he could have cut short the work by one mortal blow upon the Tyrant and his accomplices? It was his Sovereign pleasure to act so, though not without other reasons intelligible enough by looking into the story. Why doth he not bring man to a perfection of stature in a moment after his Birth, but let him continue in a tedious infancy in a semblance to beasts for want of an exercise of reason? Why doth he not bring this or that man, whom he intends for service to a fitness in an instant but by long tracts of Study, and through many *Meanders* and *Labyrinths*? Why doth he transplant a hopeful person in his youth to the pleasures of another World, and let another of an eminent Holiness, continue in the misery of this, and wade through many Floods of Afflictions? What can we chiefly referre all these things to, but his Sovereign pleasure. The times are determined by God. *Acts 17. 26.*

3. The Dominion of God is manifested as a Governor, as well as a Law-giver and Proprietor.

1. In



\* Mr. Mede in  
one of his Let-  
ters.

\* Josephus.

1. In disposing of States and Kingdoms. *Psal. 75. 7. God is Judge, he puts down one, and sets up another*; Judge is to be taken not in the same sense, that we commonly use the word for a judicial Minister in a way of tryal, but for a Governour; as you know the extraordinary Governours rais'd up among the *Jews*, were call'd Judges, whence one intire Book in the Old Testament is so denominated, the Book of *Judges*. God hath a Prerogative, to *change times and seasons*. *Dan. 2. 21. i. e. The Revolutions of Government, whereby times are alter'd.*\* How many Empires that have spread their wings over a great part of the world, have had their Carcasses torn in peices; and unheard off Nations pluckt of the wings of the *Roman Eagle*, after it had prey'd upon many Nations of the World? And the *Macedonian Empire* was as the dew, that is dried up a short time after it falls. He erected the *Chaldean Monarchy*, us'd *Nebuchadnezzar* to overthrow and punish the ungrateful *Jews*; and by a Sovereign act gave a great parcel of Land into his hands; and what he thought was his right by conquest, was Gods donative to him. You may read the Charter to *Nebuchadnezzar*, whom he terms his Servant. *Jer. 27. 6. And now I have given all those Lands, the Lands are mentioned, verse 3. Into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon my Servant.* Which Decree he pronounceth after his asserting his right of Sovereignty over the *whole Earth*. ver. 5. After that, he puts a period to the *Chaldean Empire*, and by the same Sovereign Authority decrees *Babylon* to be a spoil to the Nations of the North Countrey, and delivers her up as a spoil to the *Persian*. *Jer. 50. 9, 10. And this for the manifestation of his Sovereign Dominion, that he was the Lord, that made peace, and created evil. Isaiah 45. 6, 7. God afterwards overthrows that by the Grecian Alexander, prophesied of under the figure of a Goat, with one horn between his Eyes. Dan. 8. The swift current of his Victories, as swift as his motion shew'd it to be from an extraordinary hand of Heaven, and not either from the policy or strength of the Macedonian.* His strength in the Prophet is described to be less, being but *one horn* running against the *Persian* describ'd under the figure of a *Ram with two horns*\*. And himself acknowledg'd a Divine motion exciting him to that great attempt, when he saw *Jaddus* the High Priest, coming out in his Priestly Robes, to meet him at his approach to *Jerusalem*; whom he was about to Worship, acknowledging that the Vision, which put him upon the *Persian War*, appear'd to him in such a garb. What was the reason *Israel* was rent from *Judah*, and both split into two distinct Kingdoms? Because *Rehoboam* would not hearken to sober and sound Counsels, but follow the advice of upstarts. What was the reason he did not harken to sound advice, since he had so advantageous an Education under his Father *Solomon* the wisest Prince of the World? *The Cause was from the Lord. 1 Kings 12. 15.* That he might perform, what he had before spoke. In this he acted according to his Royal Word, but in the first resolve he acted as a Sovereign Lord that had the disposal of all Nations in the world. And though *Ahab* had a numerous posterity, *Seventy sons* to inherit the Throne after him, yet God by his Sovereign Authority gives them up into the hands of *Jehu*, who strips them of their lives and hopes together; not a man of them succeeded in the Throne, but the Crown is transferr'd to *Jehu* by Gods disposal.

In Warrs, whereby flourishing Kingdoms are overthrown, God hath the cheif hand; in reference to which it is observed, that in the two Prophets, *Isaiah* and *Jeremy*, God is called the *Lord of Hosts* 130 times. 'Tis not the Sword of the Captain, but the Sword of the Lord, bears the first rank; *The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon. Judg. 7. 18.* The Sword of a Conqueror is the Sword of the Lord, and receives its Charge and Commission from the great Sovereign. *Jerem. 47. 6, 7.* We are apt, to confine our thoughts to second Causes, lay the fault upon the miscarriages of persons, the Ambition of the one, and the Covetousness of another, and regard them not as the effects of Gods sovereign Authority, linking second Causes together, to serve his own purpose. The skill of one man may lay open the folly of a Counsellour, an earthly force may break in peices the power of a mighty Prince. But *Job* in his consideration of those things, refers the matter higher. *Job 12. 18. He looseth the bond of Kings, and girath their Loyns*



*Lays with a girdle.* He looseth the *Bonds of Kings*, i. e. takes off the yokes, they lay upon their Subjects; and girds their *Loins with a girdle*; A Cord as the Author; he lays upon them those fetters they fram'd for others, such a girdle or band as is the mark of Captivity, as the words ver. 10. confirm it. *He leads Princes away spoil'd, and overthrowes the mighty.* God lifts up some to a great height, and casts down others to a disgraceful ruine. All those changes in the face of the World, the revolutions of Empires, the desolating and ravaging wars which are often immediately the birth of the Vice, Ambition, and fury of Princes, are the Royal Acts of God as Governour of the World. All Government belongs to him, he is the Fountain of all the Great and the Petty Dominions in the World: And therefore may place in them what substitutes and Vicegerents he pleaseth; As a Prince may remove his Officers at pleasure, and take their Commissions from them. The highest are settled by God, *durant bene placito*, and not *quandiu bene se gesserint*. Those Princes that have been the Glory of their Country, have sway'd the Scepter but a short time, when the more Wolvish ones have remain'd longer in Commission, as God hath seen fit for the ends of his own Sovereign Government. Now by the revolutions in the World and Changes in Governours and Government, God keeps up the acknowledgment of his Sovereignty, when he doth strike grand and publick offenders, that wear a Crown by his Providence, and employ it by their pride against him, that he'd it there. When he arraigns such by a signal hand from Heaven, he makes them the publick examples of the rights of his Sovereignty, declaring thereby, that the *Cedars of Lebanon* are as much at his foot, as the *Shrubs* of the Valley; that he hath as Sovereign an Authority over the Throne in the Palace, as over the Stool in the Cottage.

2. The Dominion of God is manifested in *raising up and ordering the Spirits of men according to his pleasure.* He doth, as the Father of Spirits, communicate an influence to the Spirits of men as well as an existence; he puts what inclinations he pleaseth into the will, stores it with what habits he please, whether natural or supernatural, whereby it may be render'd more ready to act according to the divine purpose. The will of man is a finite principle, and therefore subject to him who hath an infinite Sovereignty over all things; and God having a Sovereignty over the will in the manner of its acting, as causeth it to will, what he wills, as to the outward act, and the outward manner of performing it. There are many examples of this part of his Sovereignty. God by his Sovereign conduct, ordered *Moses* a Protector's as soon as his Parents had form'd an *Ark of Bulrushes*, wherein to set him floating on the River. *Exod.* 2. 3, 4. 5. 6. They expose him to the waves, and the waves expose him to the view of *Pharaoh's* Daughter, whom God by his secret ordering her motion, had posted in that place; and though she was the Daughter of a Prince, that inveterately hated the whole Nation, and had by various Arts endeavour'd to extirpate them; yet God inspires the Royal Lady with sentiments of compassion to the forlorn Infant, though she knew him to be one of the *Hebrews* Children, *ver.* 6. i. e. one of that race, whom her Father had devoted to the hands of an Executioner, yet God that doth by his Sovereignty rule over the Spirits of all men, moves her to take that Infant into her protection, and nourish him at her own charge, give him a liberal Education, Adopt him her Son, who in time was to be the ruin of her race, and the Saviour of his Nation. Thus he appointed *Cyrus* to be his *Shepherd*, and gave him a Pastoral Spirit for the Restauration of the City, and Temple of *Jerusalem*. *Isaiah* 44. 28. And *Isaiah* 45. 5. Tells them in the Prophecie, that he had girded him, though *Cyrus* had *not known* him, i. e. God had given him a military Spirit and strength for so great an attempt, though he did not know, that he was acted by God for those divine purposes. And when the time came, for the House of the Lord to be re-built, the Spirits of the people were rais'd up not by themselves, but by God. *Ezra* 1. 5. *Whose Spirit God had rais'd to go up.* And not only the Spirit of *Zerubbabel* the Magistrate, and of *Josua* the Priest, but the Spirit of all the people, from the highest to the meanest that attended him, were acted by God, to strengthen their hands, and promote the



the work. *Hag. 1. 14.* The Spirits of men, even in those works which are naturally desirable to them, as the Restauration of the *City*, and rebuilding of the *Temple* was to those *Jews*, are acted by God, as the sovereign over them, much more when the wheels of mens spirits are lifted up above their ordinary temper and motion. It was this Empire of God, good *Nehemiah* regarded, as that whence he was to hope for success; he did not assure himself so much of it, from the favour he had with the King, nor the reasonableness of his intended Petition, but the absolute power God had over the heart of that great *Monarch*: And therefore he supplicates the heavenly, before he petitioned the earthly Throne. *Nehem. 2. 4.* *So I pray'd to the God of Heaven.* The Heathens had some glance of this; 'tis an expression that *Cicero* hath some where, *That the Roman Commonwealth was rather Govern'd by the Assistance of the Supreme Divinity over the Hearts of Men, than by their own Counsels and Management.* How often hath the feeble courage of men been heightened to such a pitch, as to stare death in the face, which before were damp't with the least thought or glance of it? This is a fruit of Gods sovereign Dominion.

3. The Dominion of God is manifest in *restraining the furious passions of men, and putting a block in their way.* Sometimes God doth it by a remarkable hand, as the *Babel* builders were diverted from their proud design by a sudden confusion of their Language, and rendring it unintelligible to one another; sometimes by ordinary, though unexpected, means; as when *Saul* like a *Hawk* was ready to prey upon *David*, whom he had hunted as a *Partridge* upon the Mountains, he had another object presented for his arms and fury by the *Philistines* suddain invasion of a part of his Territory, *1 Sam. 23. 26, 27, 28.* But it is chiefly seen by an inward curling mutinous affections, when there is no visible Cause. What reason but this can be render'd, why the Nations bordering on *Canaan*, who bore no good will to the *Jews*, but rather wished the whole race of them rooted out from the face of the Earth, should not invade their Countrey, pillage their Houses, and plunder their Cattle, while they were left naked of any humane defence, the Males being annually employ'd at one time at *Jerusalem* in Worship; what reason can be render'd, but an invisible curb God put into their Spirits? What was the reason not a man of all the Buyers and Sellers in the Temple should rise against our Saviour, when with a high hand he began to whip them out; but a Divine bridle upon them? though it appears by the questioning his Authority, that there were *Jews* enough to have chas'd out him, and his Company. *John 2. 15. 18.* What was the reason that at the publishing the Gospel by the *Apostles* at the first descent of the spirit, those that had us'd the Master so barbarously a few days before, were not all in a foam against the Servants, that by preaching that Doctrine upbraided them with the late Murder? Had they better sentiments of the Lord, whom they had put to death? Were their natures grown tamer, and their malignity expell'd? No, but that sovereign who had loos'd the Reins of their malicious corruption, to execute the Master for the purchase of Redemption, curb'd it from breaking out against the servants, to further the propagation of the Doctrine of Redemption. He that restrains the roaring Lyon of Hell, restrains also his Whelps on Earth; he, and they must have a Commission, before they can put forth a finger, to hurt, how malicious soever their nature and Will be. His Empire reaches over the Malignity of Devils, as well as the nature of Beasts. The Lions out of the Den, as well as those in the Den, are bridled by him in favour of his *Danields*. His Dominion is above that of Principalities and Powers, their Decrees are at his Mercy, whither they shall stand or fall; he hath a vote above their stiffest resolves. His single word *I will*, or *I forbid* outweighs the most resolute purposes of all the Mighty *Nimrods* of the Earth in their rendezvouses, and Cabals, in their Associations and Counsels. *Isaiah 8. 9, 10.* *Associate your selves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in peices, take Counsel together, and it shall come to nought. When the Enemy shall come in like a flood, with a violent and irresistible force, intending nothing but ravage and desolation, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against them, Isaiah 59. 19.* shall give a sudden check.



check and damp their Spirits, and put them to a stand. When *Laban* furiously pursued *Jacob* with an intent to do him an ill turn, God gave him a *Command* to do otherwise, *Gen.* 31. 24. Would *Laban* have respected that command any more, than he did the light of Nature, when he Worshipped Idols, had not God exercised his Authority, in inclining his will to observe it, or laying restraints upon his natural inclinations, or denying his concurrence to the acting those ill intentions, he had entertain'd? The stilling the principles of commotion in men, and the noise of the Sea, are arguments of the Divine Dominion, neither the one, nor the other, is in the power of the most sovereign Prince without Divine assistance. As no Prince can command a calm to a raging Sea, so no Prince can order stillness to a tumultuous people; they are both put together as equally parts of the Divine prerogative, *Psal.* 65. 7. Which stills the noise of the Sea, and tumult of the People. And *David* owns Gods sovereignty more than his own, in judging the people under him, *Psal.* 18. 47. In this his Empire is illustrious, *Psal.* 29. 10. The Lord sitteth upon the floods, yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever; a King impossible to be depos'd; not only on the natural floods of the Sea, that would naturally overflow the World; but the metaphorical floods or tumults of the people, the Sea in every wicked man's Heart, more apt to rage morally, than the Sea to foam naturally; if you will take the interpretation of an Angel, Waters and Floods in the Prophetick stile signify the inconstant and mutable people. *Revel.* 17. 15. The Waters where the whore sits, are people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. So the Angel expounds to *John* the Vision, which he saw *rev.* 1. The Heathens acknowledg'd this part of Gods sovereignty in the inward restraints of Men. Those Apparitions of the Gods, and Goddesses in *Homer* to several of the great men, when they were in a Fury, were nothing else in the Judgment of the wisest *Philosophers*, than an exercise of Gods sovereignty in quelling their passions, checking their uncomely intentions, and controuling them in that which their rage prompted them to. And indeed did not God set bounds to the storms in mens hearts, we should soon see the Funeral not only of Religion, but Civility; the one would be blown out, and the other torn up by the Roots.

4. The Dominion of God is manifest in defeating the purposes and devices of men. God often makes a mock of humane projects, and doth as well accomplish that which they never dreamt of, as disappoint that which they confidently design'd. He is present at all Cabals, laughs at mens formal and studied Counsels, bears a hand over every Egg they hatch, thwarts their best compacted designs, supplants their contrivances, breaks the Engines they have been many years rearing, diverts the intentions of men, as a mighty Wind blows an arrow from the mark, which the Archer intended. *Job* 5. 12. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprize. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the Council of the froward is carried headlong. Enemies often draw an exact scheme of their intended proceedings, Marshal their Companies, appoint their Rendezvous, think to make but one morsel of those they hate; God by his sovereign Dominion turns the scale, changeth the gloominess of the oppressed into a Sun-shine, and the Enemies Sun-shine into darkness. When the Nations were gathered together against *Sion*, and said, Let her be desiled, and let our Eye look upon *Sion*. *Micah* 4. 11. What doth God do in this case? *Ver.* 12. He shall gather them. i. e. Those conspiring Nations, as sheaves into the floor; then he sounds a Trumpet to *Sion*, Arise and thresh O Daughter of *Sion*, for I will make thy Horn Iron, and thy Hoofs Brass, and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: And I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole Earth. I will make them, and their Counsels, them, and their strength, the monuments and signal marks of my Empire over the whole Earth.

When you see the cunningest designs baffled by some small thing intervening, when you see men of profound Wisdom infatuated, mistake their way, and grope in the noon day as in the night. *Job* 5. 14. bewildred in a plain way. When you see the hopes of mighty attempters dash'd into despair, their triumphs turn'd into funerals, and their joyful expectations into sorrowful disappointments; when you see the weak devoted to destruction, victorious, and the most presumptuous

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defeated in their purposes, then read the divine Dominion in the desolation of such devices. How often doth God take away the Heart and Spirit of grand designs, and burst a mighty wheel, by snatching but one man out of the World? How often doth he cut off the spirits of *Princes*, *Psal.* 76. 12. either from the World by death, or from the execution of their projects by some unforeseen interruption, or from favouring those contrivances, which before they cherish'd, by a change of their minds? How often hath confidence in God, and religious Prayer, edg'd the weakest and smallest number of weapons, to make a carnage of the carnally confident? How often hath presumption been disappointed, and the contemn'd Enemy rejoyc'd in the spoils of the proud expectant of victory.

\* *Græc. symb.*  
lib. 2. cap. 65.

\* *Phidias* made the Image of *Nemesis* or revenge at *Marathon*, of that Marble, which the haughty *Persians* despising the weakness of the *Athenian* forces, brought with them, to erect a Trophy for an expected, but an ungain'd victory. *Haman's* neck by a sudden turn was in the Halter, when the *Jews* necks were design'd to the block. *Julian* design'd the overthrow of all the *Christians*, just before his breast was pierc'd by an unexpected Arrow. The Powder-Traytors were all ready to give fire to the Mine, when the Sovereign hand of Heaven snatch'd away the match. Thus the great Lord of the World cuts off men on the pinnacle of their designs, when they seem to threaten Heaven and Earth. Puts out the Candle of the wicked, which they thought to use to light them to the execution of their purposes; turns their own Counsels into a curse to themselves, and a blessing to their Adversaries, and makes his greatest Enemies contribute to the effecting his purposes. How may we take notice of Gods absolute disposal of things in private affairs, when we see one man with a small measure of Prudence, and little Industry have great success, and others with a greater measure of Wisdom, and greater toil and labour, find their enterprizes melt between their fingers? It was *Solomon's* observation, *That the race was not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill. Eccles.* 9. 11.

Many things might interpose to stop the swift in his race, and damp the courage of the most valiant. Things do not happen according to mens ability, but according to the over-ruling Authority of God. God never yet granted man the dominion of his own way, no more than to be Lord of his own time; *the way of man is not in himself, it is not in him that walketh to direct his steps. Jerem.* 10. 23. He hath given man a power of acting, but not the sovereignty to command success. He makes even those things, which men intended for their security, to turn to their ruine. *Pilate* delivered up *Christ*, to be accounted a friend to *Cæsar*, and *Cæsar* soon after proves an Enemy to him, removes him from his Government, and sends him into banishment. The *Jews* imagined by the crucifying *Christ* to keep the *Roman* Ensigns at a distance from them, and this hasten'd their march by Gods sovereign disposal, which ended in a total desolation. He makes the *Judges* fools. *Job* 12. 17. by taking away his light from their understanding, and suffering them to go on in the vanity of their own Spirits; that his sovereignty in the management of things may be more apparent: For then he is known to be Lord, when he snares the wicked in the work of his own hands. *Psal.* 9. 16. You have seen much of this doctrine in your experience; and if my judgment fail me not, you will yet see much more.

5. The Dominion of God is manifest in sending his Judgments upon whom he please. He kills, and makes alive, he wounds, and heals whom he pleaseth. His thunders are his own, and he may cast them upon what subjects he thinks good. He hath a right in a way of Justice to punish all men, he hath his choice in a way of Sovereignty, to pick out whom he please, to make the examples of it. Might not some Nations be as wicked as those of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, yet have not been scorcht with the like dreadful flames? *Zoar* was untoucht, while the other Cities her Neighbours were burnt to ashes. Were there never any places and persons successors in *Sodom's* guilt? Yet those only by his Sovereign Authority are separated by him, to be the examples of his *Eternal vengeance. Jude* 7. Why are



are not sinners as *Sodom*, like as those ancient ones, scalded to death by the like fiery drops: 'tis because it is his pleasure; and the same reason is to be rendered, why he would in a way of Justice cut off the *Jews* for their sins, and leave the *Gentiles* untouched in the midst of their Idolatries. When the Church was consumed because of her iniquities, they acknowledg'd Gods Sovereignty in this. *Isaiah* 64. 7, 8. *We are the Clay, and thou art our Potter, and we all the work of thy hands*; thou hast a liberty either to break, or preserve us. Judgments move according to Gods order. When the Sword hath a charge against *Askelon* and the Sea shoar, thither it must march, and touch not any other place or person, as it goes, though there may be demerit enough for it to punish. *Jer.* 47. 6, 7. When the Prophet had spake to the Sword, *Oh thou Sword of the Lord, how long will it be, ere thou be quiet? Put up thy self into thy scabbard, rest and be still.* The Prophet answers for the Sword, *how can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge against Askelon, there hath he appointed it?* If he hath appointed a judgment against *London*, or *Westminster*, or any other place, there it shall drop, there it shall pierce, and in no other place without a like charge. God as a Sovereign, gives instructions to every Judgment, when, and against whom it shall march, and what Cities, what Persons, it shall arrest; and he is punctually obeyed by them as a Sovereign Lord. All Creatures stand ready for his call, and are prepared to be Executioners of his vengeance, when he speaks the word; they are his Hosts by Creation, and in array for his service; at the sound of his Trumpet, or beat of his Drum, they troop together with their Arms in their hands, to put his Orders exactly in execution.

6. The Dominion of God is manifest, *in appointing to every man his calling and station in the World.* If the hairs of every mans head fall under his Sovereign care, the Calling of every man, wherein he is to glorifie God, and serve his Generation, which is of a greater concern than the hairs of the head, falls under his Dominion. He is the Master of the great Family; and divides to every one his work as he pleaseth. The whole work of the *Messiah*, the time of every action, as well as the hour of his Passion was ordered, and appointed by God. The separation of Paul to the *Preaching of the Gospel*, was by the Sovereign disposal of God, *Rom.* 1. 1. By the same exercise of his Authority, that he sets every man the bounds of his habitation, *Acts* 17. 26. he prescribes also to him the nature of his work. He that ordered *Adam*, the Father of mankind his work, and the place of it, the dressing the Garden. *Gen.* 2. 15. doth not let any of his posterity be their own choosers, without an influence of his Sovereign direction on them. Though our Callings are our work, yet they are by Gods order, wherein we are to be faithful to our great Master and Ruler.

7. The Dominion of God is manifest *in the means and occasions of mens Conversion.* Sometimes one occasion, sometimes another, one word lets a man go, another arrests him, and brings him before God, and his own Conscience; 'tis as God gives out the order. He lets Paul be a Prisoner at *Jerusalem*, that his cause should not be determined there, moves him to appeal to *Cæsar*, not only to make him a Prisoner but a Preacher in *Cæsars* Court, and render his chains an occasion to bring in a Harvest of Converts in *Nero's* Palace. *Phil.* 12. 13. His bonds in or for Christ are manifest in all the Palace, not the bare knowledge of his bonds, but the sovereign design of God in those Bonds, and the success of them; the bare knowledge of them would not make others more confident for the Gospel, as it follows v. 14. without a providential design of them. *Onesimus* running from his Master, is guided by Gods sovereign order into Pauls Company, and thereby into Christ's arms, and he who came a fugitive, returns a Christian. *Phil.* 10. 15. Some by a strong affliction, have had by the Divine sovereignty their understandings awakened to consider, and their wills spirited to conversion. *Monica* being call'd *Meribibula* or tofs-pot, was brought to consider her way, and reform her Life. A word hath done that at one time, which hath often before fallen without any fruit. Many have come to suck in the Eloquence of the Minister, and have found in the Honey for their Ears a sting



for their Conſciences. *Auſtin* had no other intent in going to hear *Ambroſe*, but to have a taſt of his famous Oratory; but while *Ambroſe* ſpoke a Language to his Ear, God ſpoke a heavenly Dialect to his heart. No reaſon can be render'd of the order and timing, and influence of thoſe things, but the ſovereign pleaſure of God, who will attend one occaſion and ſeaſon with his bleſſing and not another.

8. The Dominion of God is manifeſt in *diſpoſing of the Lives of men*. He keeps the key of Death, as well as that of the Womb in his own hand; he hath given man a Life, but not power to diſpoſe of it, or lay it down at his pleaſure: And therefore he hath ordered man not to murder, not another, not himſelf, man muſt expect his call and grant, to diſpoſe of the Life of his Body. Why doth he cut the thred of this mans Life, and ſpin anothers out to a longer term? Why doth one die an inglorious death, and another more honourable? One ſilently drops away in the multitude, while another is made a Sacrifice for the Honour of God, or the ſafety of his Countrey. This is a mark of Honour he gives to one and not to another. *Phil. 1. 29. To you it is given.* The manner of *Peters* death was appointed. *John 21. 19.* Why doth a ſmall and ſlight Diſeaſe againſt the Rules of Phyſick, and the Judgment of the beſt Practitioners, diſlodge one mans Soul out of his Body, while a greater Diſeaſe is maſter'd in another, and diſcharges the Patient, to enjoy himſelf a longer time in the Land of the Living? Is it the effect of means ſo much, as of the ſovereign diſpoſer of all things? If means only did it, the ſame means would alway work the ſame effect, and ſooner maſter a dwarfiſh than a Gyant-like Diſtemper. *Our times are only in Gods hands, Pſal. 31. 15.* Either to cut ſhort, or continue long. As his ſovereignty made the firſt Marriage knot, ſo he reſerves the ſole Authority to himſelf to make the Divorce.

4. The Dominion of God is manifeſt in *his being a Redeemer*, as well as Law-giver, Proprietor and Governour. His Sovereignty was manifeſt in the Creation in beſtowing upon this or that part of matter a form more excellent than upon another. He was a Law-giver to Men and Angels, and preſcribed them rules according to the Councel of his own Will. Theſe were his Creatures and perfectly at his diſpoſal; but in Redemption a ſovereignty is exerciſed over the Son, the *ſecond Perſon* in the Trinity, one equal with the Father in eſſence and works, by whom the worlds were created, and by whom they do conſiſt. The whole Goſpel is nothing elſe but a declaration of his ſovereign pleaſure concerning Chriſt and concerning us in him; 'tis therefore call'd *the Myſtery of his Will*, *Eph. 1. 9.* The Will of God as diſtinct from the Will of Chriſt, a purpoſe in himſelf, not mov'd thereunto by any; the whole deſign was fram'd in the Deity, and as much the purpoſe of his ſovereign Will, as the contrivance of his immenſe Wiſdom. He decreed in his own pleaſure, to have the ſecond perſon aſſume our Nature for to deliver mankind from that miſery, whereinto it was fallen: The whole of the Goſpel and the Priviledges of it are in that chapter reſolved into the will and pleaſure of God.

God is therefore called *the head of Chriſt*, *1 Cor. 11. 3.* As Chriſt is ſuperior to all men, and the man ſuperior to the woman, ſo is God ſuperior to Chriſt, and of a more eminent dignity; in regard of the conſtituting him mediator, Chriſt is Subject to God, as the Body to the Head. Head is a Title of Government and Sovereignty, and Magiſtrates were called the heads of the People. As Chriſt is the head of Man, ſo is God the head of Chriſt, and as man is ſubject to Chriſt, ſo is Chriſt ſubject to God; not in regard of the Divine Nature, wherein there is an equality, and conſequently no Dominion of juriſdiction; nor only in his humane nature, but in the Oeconomy of a Redeemer, conſidered as one deſign'd, and conſenting to be incarnate, and take our fleſh, ſo that after this agreement, God had a ſovereign right to diſpoſe of him according to the Articles conſented to. In regard of his undertaking, and the advantage he was to bring to the Elect of God upon the Earth, he calls God by the ſolemn Title of his Lord, in that prophetic



phetick Psalm of him. *Pfal. 16. 2. Oh my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord, my Goodness extends not unto thee, but unto the Saints that are in the Earth.* It seems to be the speech of Christ in Heaven, mentioning the Saints on Earth as at a distance from him. I can add nothing to the glory of thy Majesty, but the whole fruit of my Mediation and Sufferings will redound to the Saints on Earth; and it may be observed, that God is call'd the Lord of Hosts in the Evangelical Prophets *Isaiah, Haggai, Zachary, and Malachy*, more in reference to this affair of Redemption, and the deliverance of the Church, than for any other works of his Providence in the World.

1. This Sovereignty of God appears, *in requiring satisfaction for the sin of man.* Had he indulg'd man after his fall, and remitted his offence without a just compensation for the injury he had received by his Rebellion, his Authority had been vilified, man would always have been attempting against his jurisdiction, there would have been a continual succession of Rebellions on mans part, and if a continual succession of indulgences on Gods part, he had quite disown'd his Authority over man, and stript himself of the flower of his Crown; satisfaction must have been requir'd sometime or other, from the person thus rebelling, or some other in his stead; and to require it after the first act of sin, was more preservative to the right of the Divine sovereignty, than to do it after a multitude of repeated revolts. God must have laid aside his Authority, if he had laid aside wholly the exacting punishment for the offence of man.

2. This Sovereignty of God appears, *in appointing Christ to this work of Redemption.* His sovereignty was before manifest over Angels and Men by the right of Creation, there was nothing wanting to declare the highest charge of it, but his ordering his own Son to become a mortal Creature; the Lord of all things to become lower than those Angels, that had, as well as all other things, receiv'd their being and beauty from him, and to be reckon'd in his death among the dust and refuse of the World: He by whom God created all things, not only became a man, but a crucified man by the Will of his Father. *Gal. 1. 4. Who gave himself for our sins according to the Will of God;* to which may referre that expression. *Prov. 8. 22. of his being possessed by God in the beginning of his way.* Possession is the Dominion of a thing invested in the possessor; he was possessed indeed as a Son by eternal Generation. He was possessed also in the beginning of his way or works of Creation as a Mediator by special constitution; to this the expression, seems to referre, if you read on to the end of verse 31. wherein Christ speaks of his *rejoycing in the habitable part of his Earth*, the Earth of the great God, who had design'd him to this special work of Redemption. He was a Son by Nature, but a Mediator by Divine Will; in regard of which Christ is often call'd Gods servant, which is a relation to God as a Lord. God being the Lord of all things, the Dominion of all things inferior to him is inseparable from him, and in this regard, the whole of what Christ was to do, and did actually do, was acted by him as the Will of God, and is exprest so by himself in the Prophecie, *Psal. 40. 7. Lo I come, verse 8. I delight to do thy will,* which are put together, *Heb. 10. 7. Lo I come to do thy Will O God.* The designing Christ to this work was an act of mercy, but founded on his sovereignty. His compassionate bowels might have pitied us without his being sovereign, but without it could not have relieved us. It was the Counsell of his own will, as well as of his Bowels. None was his Counsellor, or perswader to that mercy he shew'd, *Rom. 11. 34. Who hath been his Counsellor,* for it refers to that Mercy, in sending the deliverer out of Sion, *verse 26.* as well as to other things, the Apostle had been discoursing of. As God was at liberty to create, or not to create, so he was at liberty to Redeem or not to Redeem, and at his liberty whither to appoint Christ to this work, or not to call him out to it. In giving this order to his Son, his sovereignty was exercised in a higher manner, than in all the orders and instructions he hath given out to Men or Angels, and all the employments he ever sent them upon. Christ hath names which signifie an Authority over him. He is called *an Angel*, and a *Messenger*.



*Messenger, Mal. 3. 1. An Apostle. Heb. 3. 1.* Declaring thereby, that God hath as much Authority over him, as over the Angels, sent upon his Messages, or over the Apostles commission'd by his Authority, as he was consider'd in the quality of Mediator.

3. This Sovereignty of God appears *in transferring our sins upon Christ*. The Supream Power in a Nation can only appoint or allow of a commutation of punishment; 'Tis a part of Sovereignty, to transferr the penalty due to the crime of one upon an other, and substitute a sufferer with the sufferers own consent, in the place of a criminal, whom he had a mind to deliver from a deserv'd punishment. God transferr'd the sins of men upon Christ, and inflicted on him a punishment for them. He summ'd up the debts of man, chang'd them upon the score of Christ, imputing to him the guilt, and inflicting upon him the penalty. *Jst. 53. 6. The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all; He made them all to meet upon his back. He hath made him to be sin for us. 2 Cor. 5. 21.* He was made so by the Sovereign pleasure of God. A punishment for sin, as most understand it, which could not be Righteously inflicted, had not sin been first Righteously imputed by the consent of Christ, and the order of the Judge of the World. This imputation could be the immediate act of none but God, because he was the sole Creditor. A Creditor is not bound to accept of another's suretiship, but it is at his liberty whither he will or no; and when he doth accept of him, he may challenge the Debt of him, as if he were the Principal Debtor himself. Christ made himself sin for us, by a voluntary submission, and God made him sin for us, by a full imputation, and treated him penally, as he would have done those sinners in whose stead he suffer'd. Without this Act of Sovereignty in God, we had for ever perished: For if we could suppose Christ laying down his life for us without the pleasure and order of God, he could not have been said to have born our punishment; What could he have undergone in his Humanity, but a temporal death, but more than this was due to us, even the wrath of God, which far exceeds the calamity of a meer bodily death? The Soul being principal in the crime, was to be principal in the punishment. The wrath of God could not have dropt upon his Soul, and render'd it so full of Agonies, without the hand of God. A creature is not capable to reach the Soul, neither as to comfort nor terror; and the Justice of God could not have made him a sufferer, if it had not first consider'd him a sinner by imputation, or by inhærency and actual commission of a crime in his own person. The latter was far from Christ, who was holy, harmless and undefiled. He must be considered then in the other state of imputation, which could not be without a Sovereign appointment, or at least concession of God: For without it, he could have had no more Authority to lay down his life for us, than *Abraham* could have had to have sacrific'd his son, or any man to expose himself to death without a call; Nor could any Plea have been entred in the Court of Heaven, either by Christ for us, or by us for our selves. And though the death of so great a person had been meritorious in it self, it had not been meritorious for us, or accepted for us; Christ is *deliver'd up by him, Rom. 8. 32.* in every part of that condition wherein he was, and suffer'd, and to that end, that *we might become the Righteousness of God in him. 2 Cor. 5. 21.* That we might have the Righteousness of him that was God, imputed to us, or that we might have a Righteousness as great, and proportion'd to the Righteousness of God, as God requir'd. It was an act of Divine Sovereignty, to account him, that was Righteous, a sinner in our stead, and to account us, who were sinners, Righteous upon the merit of his death.

4. *This was done by the command of God, by God as a Law-giver*, having the supream Legislative and Præceptive Authority; In which respect, the whole work of Christ is said to be an answer to a Law, not one given him, but put into his heart, as the Law of nature was in the heart of man at first. *Psal. 40. 7, 8. Thy Law is within my heart.* This Law was not the Law of Nature, or Moral Law, though that was also in the heart of Christ, but the command of doing those things



things which were necessary for our Salvation, and not a command so much of doing as of dying. The Moral Law in the heart of Christ would have done us no good without the Mediatory Law; We had been where we were by the sole observance of the Precepts of the Moral Law, without his suffering the penalty of it. The Law in the heart of Christ was the Law of suffering, or dying, the doing that for us by his death, which the blood of Sacrifices was unable to effect. *Legal Sacrifices thou would'st not, thy Law is within my heart.* i. e. thy Law ordered me to be a Sacrifice; It was that Law, his obedience to which was principally accepted and esteemed, and that was principally his passive, his obedience to death. *Phil. 2. 8.* This was the special command received from God, that he should dye. *John 10. 18.* This is not so clearly manifested, when this command was given, whither after the incarnation of Christ, or at the point of his constitution as Mediator, upon the transaction between the father and the son concerning the affair of Redemption. *The promise was given before the World began. Tit. 1. 2.* Might not the Precept be given, before the World began, to Christ, as consider'd in the quality of Mediator and Redeemer? Precepts and Promises usually attend one another; Every Covenant is made up of both. Christ consider'd here as the Son of God in the Divine Nature, was not capable of a command or promise, but consider'd in the relation of Mediator between God and Man, he was capable of both; Promises of Assistance were made before his actual incarnation, of which the Prophets are full: why not Precepts for his obedience, since long before his incarnation this was his speech in the Prophet, thy Law is within my heart? However, a command, a law it was, which is a fruit of the Divine Sovereignty: That as the Sovereignty of God was impeached, and violated by the disobedience of *Adam*, it might be own'd and vindicated by the obedience of Christ; That as we fell by disloyalty to it, we might rise by the highest submission to it in another head, infinitely superior in his person to *Adam*, by whom we fell.

5. This Sovereignty of God appears, *in exalting Christ to such a Sovereign dignity as our Redeemer.* \* Some indeed say, that this Sovereignty of Christ's Humane Nature was natural, and the right of it resulted from its Union with the Divine, as a Lady of mean condition, when Espous'd and Married to a Prince, hath by virtue of that a natural right to some kind of jurisdiction over the whole Kingdom: because she is one with the King. But to wave this, the Scripture placeth wholly the conferring such an Authority upon the pleasure and will of God. As Christ was a gift of God's Sovereign will to us, so this was a gift of God's Sovereign will to Christ. *Matt. 28. 28. All power is given me.* And he gave him to be head over all things to the Church. *Eph. 1. 22. God gave him a name above every name.* *Phil. 2. 9.* And therefore his Throne he sits upon, is call'd *the Throne of his Father. Rev. 3. 21.* And he committed all Judgment to the Son; i. e. All Government and Dominion; An Empire in Heaven and Earth: *Joh. 5. 22.* and that because he is the son of Man. *v. 27.* which may be understood, that the Father hath given him Authority to exercise that Judgment and Government, as the son of man, which he Originally had as the son of God; or rather because he became a servant, and humbled himself to death, he gives him this Authority as the reward of his Obedience and Humility, conformable to *Phil. 2. 9.* This is an act of the high Sovereignty of God, to obscure his own Authority in a sense, and take into association with him, or vicarious subordination to him, the Humane Nature of Christ as united to the Divine; Not only lifting it above the heads of all the Angels, but giving that person in our nature an Empire over them, whose nature was more excellent than ours. Yea the Sovereignty of God appears in the whole management of this Kingly Office of Christ: for it is managed in every part of it, according to God's order. *Ezek. 37. 24, 25. David my servant shall be King over them, and my servant David shall be their Prince for ever.* He shall be a Prince over them, but my servant in that principality, in the exercise and duration of it. The Sovereignty of God is paramount, in all that Christ hath done as a Priest, or shall do as a King.

\* *Le Siècle perfect. divin. lib. 10. p. 65.*

The



## The U S E.

## 1. For Instruction.

1. *How great is the contempt of this sovereignty of God?* Man naturally would be free from Gods Empire, to be a slave under the Dominion of his own lust. The sovereignty of God as a Law-giver is most abhorr'd by man. *Levit. 26. 43.* The Israelites, the best people in the World, were apt by nature, not only to *despise*, but *abhorre his Statutes*. There is not a Law of God but the corrupt heart of man hath an abhorrency of. How often do men wish, that God had not enacted this or that Law that goes against the grain, and in wishing for with that he were no sovereign, or not such a sovereign as he is in his own nature, but one according to their corrupt model. This is the great quarrel between God and Man, whither he or they shall be the sovereign Ruler. He should not by the Will of Man rule in any one Village in the World; Gods vote should not be predominant in any one thing. There is not a Law of his, but is expos'd to contempt by the perverseness of Man. *Prov. 1. 21. Ye have set at nought all my Counsel, and would have none of my reproof.* Septuag. *Ye have made all my Counsels without Authority.* The nature of man cannot endure one precept of God, nor one rebuke from him: And for this cause God is at the expence of Judgements in the World, to assert his own Empire to the Teeth and Consciencs of men. *Psal. 59. 13. Lord consume them in wrath, and let them know that God rules in Jacob, to the ends of the Earth.* The Dominion of God is not slighted by any Creature of this World but Man; all others observe it, by observing his Order, whither in their natural motions or preternatural irruptions; they punctually act according to their Commission. Man only speaks a Dialect against the strain of the whole Creation, and hath none to imitate him among all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, but only among those in Hell. Man is more impatient of the yoke of God, than of the yoke of Man. There are not so many rebellions committed by inferiors against their superiors and fellow Creatures, as are committed against God. A willing and easie sinning is an equalling the Authority of God to that of Man. *Hos. 6. 7. They like men have transgress'd my Covenant.* \* They have made no more account of breaking my Covenant, than if they had broken some league or compact made with a meer man, so slightly do they esteem the Authority of God. Such a disesteem of the divine Authority is a vertual undeifying of him. To slight his sovereignty is to stab his Deity: Since the one cannot be preserved without the support of the other, his life would expire with his Authority. How base and brutish is it for vile dust and mouldring clay, to lift up it self against the Majesty of God whose Throne is in the Heavens, who sways his Scepter over all parts of the World: A Majesty before whom the Devils shake, and the highest Cherubimstremble. 'Tis as if the Thistle that can presently be trod down by the foot of a wild Beast, should think it self a match for the Cedar of Lebanon, as the phrase is, *2 Kings 14. 9.*

Let us consider this *in general*, and also *in the ordinary practise of men.*

First, *In General.*

1. *All sin in its nature is a contempt of the Divine Dominion.* As every act of Obedience is a confirmation of the Law, and consequently a subscription to the Authority of the Lawgiver, *Deut. 27. 26.* so every breach to it is a conspiracy against the sovereignty of the Law-giver; setting up our Will against the Will of God is an Articling against his Authority, as setting up our reason against the methods of God, is an Articling against his Wisdom; the intendment of every act of sin, is to wrest the Scepter out of God's hand. The Authority of God is the first attribute in the Deity, which it directs its edge against; 'tis called therefore a *transgression of his Law.* *1 John 3. 4.* And therefore a slight or neglect of the Majesty of God; and the not keeping his Commands, is call'd a *forgetting God.* *Deut. 8. 11. i. e. a forgetting him to be our absolute Lord.* As the first notion we have of God as a Creator, is that of his Sovereignty, so the first perfection that sin struck at in the violation of the Law, was his sovereignty as a Lawgiver.

Break-



*Breaking the Law is a dishonouring God, Rom. 2. 23. a Snatching off his Crown ; to obey our own Wills before the Will of God, is to preferre our selves as our own Sovereigns before him. Sin is a wrong and injury to God, not in his Essence, that is above the reach of a Creature, nor in any thing profitable to him, or pertaining to his own intrinsick advantage ; not an injury to God in himself but in his Authority, in those things which pertain to his Glory, a disowning his due right, and not using his goods according to his will. Thus the whole world may be call'd, as God calls *Chaldea, a Land of Rebels. Jer. 50. 21. Go up against the Land of Merathaim, or Rebels*: Rebels, not against the Jews, but against God. The mighty opposition in the heart of man to the Supremacy of God is discovered Emphatically by the Apostle. *Rom. 8. 7. in that expression, The carnal mind is enmity against God, i. e. against the Authority of God : because it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.* It refuseth not subjection to this or that part, but to the whole ; to every mark of Divine Authority in it, it will not lay down its arms against it, nay it cannot but stand upon its terms against it ; the Law can no more be fulfill'd by a carnal mind, than it can be disowned by a sovereign God. God is so Holy, that he cannot alter a Righteous Law, and man is so averse, that he cares not for, nay cannot fulfil one Tittle ; so much doth the Nature of man swell against the Majesty of God. Now an enmity to the Law which is in every sin, implies a perversity against the Authority of God that enacted it.*

2. All sin in its nature is *the despoiling God of his sole sovereignty, which was probably the first thing the Devil aim'd at.* That pride was the sin of the Devil, the Scripture gives us some account of, when the Apostle adviseth not a novice, or one that hath but lately embraced the Faith, to be chosen a Bishop. *1 Tim. 3. 6. Least being lifted up with Pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil ;* Least he fall into the same sin, for which the Devil was condemned. But in what particular thing this pride was manifest, is not so easily discernable ; the ancients generally conceived it, to be an affecting the Throne of God, grounding it on *Isaiah 14. 12. How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, Son of the morning ! for thou hast said in thy Heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my Throne above the Stars of God.* 'Tis certain the Prophet speaks there of the King of *Babylon*, and taxeth him for his pride, and gives to him the title of *Lucifer*, perhaps likning him in his Pride to the Devil, and then it notes plainly the particular sin of the Devil, attempting a share in the sovereignty of God ; and some strengthen their conjecture from the Name of the Arch-Angel who contended against Satan. *Jude 9. which is Michael, which signifies, who as God ? or, who like God ?* The Name of the Angel giving the superiority to God, intimating the contrary disposition in the Devil, against whom he contended. 'Tis likely his sin was an affecting an equality with God in Empire, or a freedom from the sovereign Authority of God : Because he imprinted such a kind of perswasion on man at his first Temptation, *Ye shall be as Gods, Gen. 3. 5.* and though it be restrained to the matter of knowledge, yet that being a fitness for Government, it may be extended to that also. But it is plainly a perswading them, that they might be in some sort equal with God, and independent on him as their Superior. What he had found so fatal to himself, he imagined would have the same success in the ruine of man. And since the Devil hath in all ages of the World usurpt a Worship to himself, which is only due to God, and would be served by man, as if he were the God of the World. Since all his endeavour was to be Worshipt as the supream God on Earth, 'tis not unreasonable to think, that he invaded the Supremacy of God in Heaven, and endeavour'd to be like the most high before his banishment, as he hath attempted to be like the Most High since. And since the Devil and Anti-Christ are reputed by *John* in the *Revelation* to be so near of kin, and so like in disposition, why might not that which is the sin of Anti-Christ, the image of him, be also the sin of Satan, *To exalt himself above all that is called God. 2 Thes. 2. 4. and sit as God in his Temple,* affecting a partnership in his Throne and Worship ? Whither it was this, or attempting an unaccountable Dominion over created things, or because he was the Prime Angel, and the most illustrious of that mag-



magnificent corporation, he might think himself fit to Reign with God, over all things else? Or if his sin were envy, as some think at the felicity of man in Paradise; It was still a quarrelling with God's Dominion, and right of disposing his own goods and favours; He is therefore call'd *Belial*; 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15. *What concord hath Christ with Belial, i. e. with the Devil, one without yoke*, as the word *Belial* signifies.

3. 'Tis more plain, that *this was the sin of Adam*. The first act of *Adam* was to exercise a Lordship over the lower Creatures, in giving names to them, a token of Dominion. Gen. 2. 19. The next was, to affect a Lordship over God, in rebelling against him; After he had writ the first mark of his own delegated Dominion in the names he gave the Creatures, and own'd their dependance on him as their Governour, he would not acknowledge his own dependance on God. As soon as the Lord of the World had put him into possession of the power he had allotted him, he attempted to strip his Lord of that, which he had reserv'd to himself; He was not content to lay a yoke upon the other Creatures, but desirous to shake off the Divine Yoke from himself, and be subject to none but his own will; Hence *Adam's* sin is more particularly call'd *disobedience*: Rom. 5. 19. For in the eating the apple, there was no Moral evil in it self, but a contradiction to the positive command and order of God; whereby he did disown Gods right of commanding him, or reserving any thing from him to his own use. The Language all his Posterity speaks, *Let us break his bands, and cast away his cords from us*, Psa. 2. 3. was learn'd from *Adam* in that act of his. The next act we read of, was that of *Cain's* murdering *Abel*, which was an invading God's right, in assuming an Authority to dispose of the Life of his Brother, a Life which God had given him, and reserv'd the period of it in his own hands. And he persists in the same usurpation, when God came to examine him, and ask him where his Brother was, how scornful was his answer? Gen. 4. 9. *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* as much as if he had said, what have you to do to examine me? or what obligation is there upon me, to render an account of him? Or as one saith, \* 'Tis as much as if he had said, *go look him your self*. The Sovereignty of God did not remain undisturb'd as soon as ever it appear'd in Creation, the Devils rebell'd against it in Heaven, and man would have banisht it from the earth.

\* *Trap. in loc.*

4. The Sovereignty of God *hath not been less invaded by the usurpations of men*. One single order of the Roman Episcopacy hath endeavour'd to usurp the prerogatives of God; The Pope will prohibit what God hath allow'd; The Marriage of Priests, the receiving of the Cup as well as of the Bread in the Sacrament, the eating of this or that sort of meat at special times, meats which God hath sanctified; and forbid them too upon pain of damnation. 'Tis an invasion of God's right, to forbid the use of what God hath granted, as though the earth, and the fulness thereof were no longer the *Lords*, but the *Popes*; Much more to forbid what God hath commanded, as if Christ over-reacht his own Authority, when he enjoin'd all to drink of the Sacramental Wine, as well as eat of the Sacramental Bread, No Lord but will think his right usurpt by that Steward, who shall permit to others what his Lord forbids, and forbid that which his Master allows, and act the Lord instead of the Servant. Add to this the pardons of many sins, as if he had the sole key to the treasures of Divine Mercy, the disposing of Crowns and Dominions at his pleasure, as if God had divested himself of the Title of King of Kings, and transferr'd it upon the See of *Rome*. The allowing publick Stews, dispensing with incestuous Marriages, as if God had acted more the part of a Tyrant, than of a Righteous Sovereign in forbidding them; Depriving the Jews of the propriety in their Estates upon their Conversion to Christianity, as if the pilfering mens goods were the way to teach them self-denial, the first Doctrine of Christian Religion, and God shall have no honour from the Jew without a breach of his Law by theft from the Christian. Granting many years indulgences upon slight performances, the repeating so many *Ave-Maries*, and *Pater-Nosters* in a day, Canonizing Saints, claiming the Keyes of Heaven, and disposing



ling of the honours and glory of it : And proposing Creatures as objects of Religious Worship, wherein he answers the Character of the Apostle, *2 Thef. 2. 4. Shewing himself that he is God*, in challenging that power which is only the right of Divine Sovereignty ; exalting himself above God, in indulging those things which the Law of God never allow'd, but hath severely prohibited.

This controuling the Sovereignty of God, not allowing him the rights of his Crown, is the Soul and Spirit of many errors. Why are the decrees of election and preterition denyed ? because men will not acknowledge God the Sovereign disposer of his Creature. Why is effectual calling and efficacious grace denyed ? because they will not allow God the proprietor and distributor of his own goods. Why is the satisfaction of Christ deny'd ? because they will not allow God a power to vindicate his own Law, in what way he pleaseth. Most of the errors of men may be resolv'd into a denyal of God's Sovereignty ; All have a tincture of the first evil sentiment of *Adam*.

2. The Sovereignty of God is contemned in the practices of men.

1. *As he is a Law-giver.*

1. *When Laws are made, and urg'd in any State contrary to the Law of God.* 'Tis part of God's Sovereignty to be a Law-giver ; not to obey his Law is a breach made upon his right of Government ; But it is Treason in any against the Crown of God, to Mint Laws with a stamp contrary to that of Heaven, whereby they renounce their due subjection, and vy with God for Dominion ; snatch the supremacy from him, and account themselves more Lords than the sovereign Monarch of the World. When men will not let God be the Judge of good and evil, but put in their own vote, controuling his, to establish their own ; Such are not content to be as Gods, subordinate to the supream God, to sit at his feet ; Nor co-ordinate with him, to sit equal upon his Throne ; but paramount to him, to over-top, and shadow his Crown. A boldness that leaves the serpent in the first temptation, under the Character of a more commendable modesty ; who advised our first Parents to attempt to be *as Gods*, but not above him, and would enervate a Law of God, but not enact a contrary one to be observ'd by them. Such was the usurpation of *Nebuchadnezzar*, to set up a *Golden Image* to be ador'd, *Dan. 3.* as if he had power to mint Gods, as well as to conquer men ; to set the stamp of a Deity upon a peice of Gold, as well as his own Effigies upon his current Coyn. Much of the same nature was that of *Darius*, by the motion of his flatterers, to prohibit any Petition to be made to God for the space of 30 *dayes*, as though God was not to have a Worship without a License from a doting peice of clay. *Dan. 6. 7.* \* *So Henry the Third of France*, by his Edict silenced Masters of Families from praying with their Houthoulds. And it is a farther contempt of God's Authority, when good men are oppress'd by the sole weight of power, for not observing such Laws, \* as if they had a real Sovereignty over the Consciences of men, more than God himself. When the *Apostles* were commanded by an Angel from God, to preach in the Temple the Doctrine of Christ. *Act. 5. 19, 20.* they were fetcht from thence with a Guard before the Council. *v. 26.* And what is the Language of those States-men to them ? as absolute as God himself could speak to any Transgressors of his Law ; *ver. 28. Did not we straitly command you, that you should not teach in this Name ?* 'Tis sufficient that we gave you a command to be silent, and publish no more this Doctrine of *Jesus* ; 'Tis not for you to examine our decrees, but rest in our order as *Loyal Subjects*, and comply with your Rulers ; They might have added, though it be with the damnation of your souls. How would those over-rule the *Apostles* by no other reason but their absolute pleasure ? And though God had espous'd their cause, by delivering them out of the Prison, wherein they had lockt them the day before ; Yet not one of all this Council had the wit, or honesty, to entitle it a fighting against God, but *Gammaliel*, *ver. 39.* So foolishly fond are men, to put themselves in the place of God, and usurp a jurisdiction over mens Consciences ; And to presume, that Laws made against the interest and command of God, must be of more force than the Laws of God's enacting.

\* *Trap. in loc.*

\* *Faucheur*  
vol. 2. p. 667.  
654.



2. The Sovereignty of God is contemnd *in making additions to the Laws of God*. The Authority of a Sovereign Law-giver is invaded and vilified, when an inferior presumes to make orders equivalent to his *Edicts*. 'Tis a *Presumprion* against Heaven, to set up an Authority distinct from that of God, or to enjoyn any thing as necessary in matter of worship, for which a Divine Commission cannot be shewn. God was alway so tender of this part of his prerogative, that he would not have any thing wrought in the Tabernacle, not a Vessel, not an instrument, but what himself had prescribed. *Exod. 25. 9. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the pattern of all the Instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it*, which is strictly urg'd again, *ver. 40. Look that thou make them after their pattern*; Look to it, beware of doing any thing of thine own head, and justling with my Authority. It was so afterwards in the matter of the Temple, which succeeded the Tabernacle; God gave the model of it to *David*, and made him understand in writing by his hand upon him, even all the works of this pattern. *1 Chron. 28. 19.* Neither the Royal Authority in *Moses*, who was King in *Jesurun*; nor in *David*, who was a man after God's own heart, and called to the Crown by a special and extraordinary providence; nor *Aaron* and the High Priests his Successors invested in the Sacerdotal Office, had any Authority from God, to do any thing in the framing the Tabernacle or Temple of their own heads. God barr'd them from any thing of that nature, by giving them an exact pattern, so dear to him was alwayes this flower of his Crown: And afterwards, the power of appointing Officers, and Ordinances in the Church was delegated to Christ, and was among the rest of those Royalties given to him, which he fully compleated for the edifying of the body. *Ephes. 4. 11, 12.* And he hath the Elogy by the Spirit of God, to be *faithfull as Moses was in all his house, to him that appointed him.* *Heb. 3. 2.* Faithfulness in a trust implies a punctual observing directions; God was still so tender of this, that even Christ the son should no more do any thing in this concern without appointment and pattern, than *Moses a servant*, *ver. 5. 6.* It seems to be a vote of nature, to refer the Original of the modes of all worship to God: and therefore in all those varieties of Ceremonies among the Heathens, there was scarce any, but were imagin'd by them to be the Dictates and Orders of some of their pretended Deities, and not the resolves of meer Humane Authority. What intrusion upon God's right hath the Papacy made in regard of Officers, *Cardinals*, *Patriarchs*, &c. not known in any Divine Order? In regard of Ceremonies in worship, prest as necessary to obtain the favour of God, *Holy-water*, *Crucifixes*, *Altars*, *Images*, *Crimings*, reviving many of the Jewish and Pagan Ceremonies, and adopting them into the Family of Christian Ordinances; as if God had been too absolute and arbitrary in repealing the one, and dashing in peices the other. When God had by his Sovereign order fram'd a Religion for the heart, men are ready to usurp an Authority to frame one for the sence, to dress the Ordinances of God in new and gaudy habits, to take the eye by a vain pomp; thus affecting a Divine Royalty, and acting a silly childishness and after this to impose the observation of those upon the Consciences of men, is a bold ascent into the Throne of God; To impose Laws upon the Conscience, which Christ hath not imposed, hath deservedly been thought the very Spirit of *Antichrist*; It may be call'd also the Spirit of *Anti-God*. God hath reserv'd to himself the sole Sovereignty over the Conscience, and never indulg'd men any part of it; he hath not given man a power over his own Conscience, much less one man a power over another's Conscience. Men have a power over outward things, to do this or that, where it is determined by the Law of God, but not the least Authority to controul any dictate or determination of Conscience: The sole Empire of that is appropriate to God, as one of the great marks of his Royalty. What an usurpation is it of God's right, to make Conscience a slave to man, which God hath solely, as the father of Spirits, subjected to himself? An usurpation which though the *Apostles*, those extraordinary Officers might better have claim'd, yet they utterly disown'd any imperious dominion over the faith of others, *2 Cor. 1. 24.* Though in this they do not seem to

climb



climb up above God, yet they set themselves in the Throne of God, envy him an absolute Monarchy, would be sharers with him in his Legislative power, and grasp one end of his Scepter in their own hands. They do not pretend to take the Crown from Gods head, but discover a bold ambition to shuile their hairy Scalps under it, and wear part of it upon their own, that they may rule with him, not under him; And would be joint *Lords of his Manner* with him, who hath by the *Apostle* forbidden any to be *Lords of his Heritage*. 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. And therefore they cannot assume such an Authority to themselves, till they can shew where God hath resign'd this part of his Authority to them. If their *Exposition* of that place. *Matth.* 16. 18. *Upon this rock I will build my Church*, be granted to be true, and that the person and Successors of *Peter* are meant by that Rock, it could be no Apology for their Usurpations; tis not *Peter* and his Successors shall build, but *I will build*; others are instruments in building, but they are to observe the directions of the grand Architect.

3. The Sovereignty of God is contemned, *when men prefer Obedience to mens Laws before Obedience to God*. As God hath an undoubted right as the Law-giver and Ruler of the World, to enact Laws, without consulting the pleasure of men, or requiring their consent to the verifying, and establishing his Edicts, so are men oblig'd by their Allegiance, as subjects, to observe the Laws of their Creator, without consulting whether they be agreeable to the Laws of his revolted Creatures. To consult with Flesh and Blood, whither we should obey, is to Authorize Flesh and Blood above the purest and most sovereign spirit. When men will obey their superiors, without taking in the condition the *Apostle* prescribes to Servants. *Col.* 3. 22. *In singleness of heart fearing God*; and post-pone the fear of God to the fear of man; tis to render God of less power with them than the drop of a Bucket, or dust of the Ballance. When we out of fear of punishment will observe the Laws of Men against the Laws of God, tis like the *Egyptians*, to Worship a ravenous *Crocodile* instead of a Deity; when we submit to humane Laws, and stagger at Divine, tis to set man upon the Throne of God, and God at the footstool of man; to set man *above*, and God *beneath*, to make him the *tail*, and not the *head*, as God speaks in another case of *Israel*. *Deut.* 28. 13. When we pay an outward observation to Divine Laws, because they are backt by the Laws of Man, and humane Authority is the motive of our observance, we subject Gods sovereignty to Mans Authority; what he hath from us, is more owing to the pleasure of men, than any value we have for the Empire of God. When men shall commit Murders, and imbrue their hands in blood by the order of a Grandee; when the worst sins shall be committed by the order of Papal dispensations; When the use of his Creatures, which God hath granted and sanctified, shall be abstain'd from for so many days in the week, and so many weeks in the year because of a *Roman* Edict; the Authority of man is acknowledg'd not only equal, but superior to that of God: The dominion of dust and clay is preferr'd before the undoubted right of the sovereign of the World: The Commands of God are made less than humane, and the orders of men more authoritative, than Divine, and a grand Rebels usurpation of Gods right is countenanced. When men are more devout in observance of uncertain Traditions, or meer humane inventions, than at the hearing of the unquestionable Oracles of God. When men shall squeeze their countenances into a more serious figure, and demean themselves in a more religious posture, at the appearance of some mock Ceremony clothed in a Jewish or Pagan garb, which hath unhappily made a rent in the Coat of Christ; and pay a more exact reverence to that, which hath no Divine, but only a humane stamp upon it, than to the clear and plain Word of God, which is perhaps neglect-ed with sleepy nods, or, which is worse, entertain'd with prophane scoffs; this is to prefer the Authority of man employ'd in trifles, before the Authority of the wise Law-giver of the World. Besides, the ridiculousness of it is as great, as to adore a Glo-worm, and laugh at the Sun; or for a Courtier to be more exact in his cringes and starcht postures before a puppet, than before his sovereign Prince. In all this we make not the Will and Authority of God our rule, but the Will of  
man.



man; Disclaim our dependance on God, to hang upon the uncertain breath of a Creature; in all this God is made less than man, and man more than God. God is depos'd, and man enthron'd, God made a slave, and man a sovereign above him. To this we may referre the solemn *Addresses* of some for the *maintenance of the Protestant Religion according to Law*, the Law of Man; not so much minding the Law of God; resolving to make the Law, the Church, the State, the Rule of their Religion, and change that, if the Laws be chang'd, steering their Opinions by the compass of the Magistrates Judgment and Interest.

2. *The Dominion of God as a Proprietor is practically contemned.*

1. *By Envy.* When we are not as flush and gay, as well spread and sparkling as others, this passion gnaws our Souls; and we become the Executioners to wrack our selves, because God is the Executor of his own pleasure. The foundation of this passion is a quarrel with God; to envy others the enjoyment of their Propriety, is to envy God his right of disposal, and consequently the propriety of his own Goods. 'Tis a mental Theft committed against God, we rob him of his right in our will, and wish; 'tis a Robbery to make our selves equal with God when it is not our due, which is implied. *Phil. 2. 6.* when Christ is said, *to think it no Robbery, to be equal with God.* We would wrest the Scepter out of his hand, wish he were not the conductor of the world, and that he would resign his Sovereignty, and the right of the distribution of his own goods to the *Capricios* of our humor, and ask our leave to what Subjects he should dispense his favours. All *Envy*, is either a tacit accusation of God as an *usurper*, and assuming a right to dispose of that, which doth not belong to him, and so it is a denial of his propriety; or else charges him with a *blind* or *unjust distribution*, and so it is a bespattering his wisdom and righteousness. When God doth punish envy, he vindicates his own Sovereignty, as though this passion chiefly endeavoured to blast this perfection. *Ezek. 25. 11, 12.* *As I live saith the Lord, I will do according to thy anger, and according to thy envy, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.* The sin of envy in the Devils was immediately against the Crown of God, and so was the sin of envy in the first man, envying God the sole Prerogative in knowledge above himself. This base humor in *Cain* at the preference of *Abels* sacrifice before his, was the cause that he deprived him of his life. Denying God first his right of choice, and what he should accept, and then invading Gods right of propriety, in usurping a power over the Life and Being of his brother, which solely belong'd to God.

2. The Dominion of God as a proprietor, is practically contemned *by a violent or surreptitious taking away from any, what God hath given him the possession of.* Since God is the Lord of all, and may give the possession and dominion of things to whom he pleaseth, all Theft and Purloining, all cheating and coustening another of his right, is not only a crime against the true possessor, depriving him of what he is intrusted with, but against God as the absolute and universal proprietor, having a right thereby, to confer his own goods, upon whom he pleaseth; as well as against God as a Lawgiver forbidding such a violence. The snatching away what is an others, denies man the right of possession, and God the right of donation. The *Israelites* taking the *Egyptians* Jewels had been Theft, had it not been by a Divine license and order; but cannot be slander'd with such a term, after the proprietor of the whole World had alter'd the Title, and alienated them by his positive grant from the *Egyptians*, to conferr them upon the *Israelites*.

3. The Dominion of God as a proprietor is practically contemned, *by not using what God hath given us, for those ends for which he gave them to us.* God passeth things over to us with a condition, to use that for his Glory which he hath bestowed upon us by his bounty. He is Lord of the end for which he gives, as well as Lord of what he gives; the donors right of propriety is infringed, when the Lands and legacies he leaves to a particular use are not employ'd to those ends, to which he bequeathed them. The right of the Lord of a Mannour is violated: when



when the Copy-hold is not us'd according to the condition of the conveyance. So it is an invasion of Gods sovereignty, not to use the Creatures for those ends, for which we are intrusted with them; when we deny our selves a due and lawful support from them; hence Covetousness is an invasion of his right; or when we unnecessarily waste them, hence prodigality disowns his propriety. Or when we bestow not any thing upon the relief of others; hence uncharitableness comes under the same title, appropriating that to our selves, as if we were the Lords, when we are but the usufructuaries for our selves, and Stewards for others; this is to be *rich to our selves, not to God.* *Luke 12. 21.* for so are they who employ not their wealth for the service and according to the intent of the donor. Thus the *Israelites* did not own God the true proprietor of their Corn, Wine, and Oyl, which God had given them for his Worship, when they prepared offerings for *Baal* out of his Stock. *Hof. 2. 8.* *For she did not know, that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplied her Gold and Silver, which they prepar'd for Baal;* as if they had been sole proprietors, and not Factors by Commission, to improve the Goods for the true owner. 'Tis the same invasion of Gods right, to use the parts and gifts, that God hath given us, either as fuel for our pride, or advancing self, or a witty scoffing at God and Religion. When we use not Religion for the honour of our Sovereign, but a stool to rise by, and observe his precepts outwardly, not out of regard to his Authority, but as a stale to our interest, and furnishing self with a little concern and trifle. When men will wrest his word for the favour of their lusts, which God intended for the checking of them, and make interpretations of it according to their humors, and not according to his Will discovered in the Scripture, this is to pervert the use of the best goods and *depositum* he hath put into our hands, even divine Revelations. Thus hypocrisie makes the sovereignty of God a nullity.

3. The Dominion of God as a *Governour* is practically contemned.

1. *In Idolatry.* Since Worship is an acknowledgment of Gods sovereignty, to adore any Creature instead of God, or to pay to any thing that homage of trust and confidence, which is due to God, though it be the highest Creature in Heaven or Earth, is to acknowledg that sovereignty, to pertain to a Creature, which is challeng'd by God; as to set up the greatest Lord in a Kingdom in the Government instead of the lawful Prince, is Rebellion and Usurpation. And that Woman incurs the Crime of Adultery, who commits it with a person of great Port and Honour, as well as with one of a mean condition. While men Create any thing a God, they own themselves supream above the true God, yea and above that, which they account a God: For by the right of Creation, they have a superiority, as it is a Deity blown up by the breath of their own imagination. The Authority of God is in this sin; acknowledged to belong to an *Idol*, 'tis call'd *leathing* of God as a husband; *Ezek. 16. 45.* all the Authority of God as a husband and Lord over them. So when we make any thing, or any person in the World the chief object and prop of our trust and confidence, we act the same part. Trust in an *Idol* is the formal part of Idolatry. *Psal. 115. 8,* *so is every one that trusts in them.* i. e. in *Idols.* Whatsoever thing we make the object of our trust, we rear as an *Idol*; 'tis not unlawful, to have the image of a Creature, but to bestow divine adoration upon it; it was not unlawful for the *Egyptians*, to possess and use Oxen, but to dubb them Gods to be ador'd, it was. 'Tis not unlawful to have Wealth and Honour, nor to have gifts and parts, they are the presents of God; but to love them above God, to fix our relyance upon them more than upon God, is to rob God of his due, who being our Creator, ought to be our confidence. What we want, we are to desire of him, and expect from him. When we confide in any thing else, we deny God the Glory of his Creation, we disown him to be Lord of the World, imply that our welfare is in the hands of, and depends upon that thing, wherein we confide; 'tis not only to *equal it to God* in sovereign power, which is his own phrase, *Isaiah 40. 25.* but to prefer it before him in a reproach of him. When the *Hosts of Heaven* shall be serv'd instead of the Lord of those Hosts; When we shall lacquy after the *Starrs*, depend barely upon their influences, without looking up to the great director of the



the Sun, 'tis to pay an adoration unto a Captain in a Regiment, which is due to the General. When we shall *make Gold our hope, and say to the fine Gold thou art my confidence*, 'tis to deny the Supremacy of that God, *that is above*, as well as if we *kiss our hands* in a way of adoration to the Sun in its splendor, or the Moon *walking in its brightness*; for Job couples them together. *Job. 31. 25. to 28.* 'Tis to prefer the Authority of Earth before that of Heaven, and honour clay above the Sovereign of the World, as if a Souldier should confide more in the rag of an Ensign, or the fragment of a Drum for his safety, than in the orders and conduct of his General; It were as much as is in his power to uncommission him, and snatch from him his Commanders Staff. When we advance the Creature in our love above God, and the Altar of our Soul smoakes with more thoughts and affections to a petty interest than to God, we lift up that which was given us as a servant in the place of the Sovereign, and bestow that Throne upon it, which is to be kept undefil'd for the rightful Lord, and subject the interest of God to the demands of the creature. So much respect is due to God, that none should be plac'd in the Throne of our affections equal with him, much less any thing to perk above him.

2. *Impatience is a contempt of God as a Governour.* When we meet with rubbs in the way of any design, when our expectations are crossed, we will break through all obstacles, to accomplish our projects, whither God will or no. When we are too much dejected at some unexpected providence, and murmur at the instruments of it, as if God deusted himself of his prerogative of conducting humane affairs. When a little cross blows us into a Mutiny, and swells us into a savciness to implead God, or makes us *fret* against him, (as the expression is, *Isaiah 8. 21.*) wishing him out of his Throne; No sin is so devilish as this: there is not any strikes more at all the attributes of God than this, against his goodness, righteousness, holiness, wisdom, and doth as little spare his *Sovereignty* as any of the rest; What can it be else, but an impious invasion of his Dominion, to quarrel with him for what he doth, and to say, what reason hast thou to deal thus with me? This Language is in the nature of all impatience, whereby we question his Sovereignty, and Parallel our Dominion with his. When men have not that confluence of wealth or honour they greedily desir'd, they bark at God, and revile his Government; They are angry God doth not more respectfully observe them, as though he had nothing to do in their matters, and were wanting in that becoming reverence, which they think him bound to pay to such great ones as they are. They would have God obedient to their minds, and act nothing, but what he receives a Commission for from their wills. When we murmur, 'tis as if we would command his Will, and wear his Crown, a wresting the Scepter out of his hands, to sway it our selves, we deny him the right of Government, disown his power over us, and would be our own Sovereigns; You may find the Character of it in the Language of *Jehoram*, (as many understand it.) *2 King. 6. 33.* *'Behold this evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?* This is an evil of such a nature, that it could come from none but the hand of God, why should I attend upon him as my Sovereign, that delights to do me so much mischief, that throws curses upon me, when I expected blessings? I'll no more observe his directions, but follow my own sentiments, and regard not his Authority in the lips of his doting Prophet. The same you find in the *Jews*, when they were under God's lash. *Jer. 18. 12.* *And they said, there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart;* We can expect no good from him, and therefore we will be our own Sovereigns, and prefer the Authority of our own imaginations before that of his Precepts. Men would be their own Carvers, and not suffer God to use his right; as if a stone should order the Mason in what manner to hew it, and in what part of the building to place it; We are not ordinarily concern'd so much at the calamities of our Neighbours, but swell against Heaven at a light drop upon our selves. We are content God should be the Sovereign of others, so that he will be a servant to us; Let him deal as he will himself with others, so he will treat us, and what relates



to us, as we will ourselves. We would have God resign his Authority to our humors, and our humors should be in the place of a God to him, to direct him what was fit to do in our cause. When things go not according to our vote, our impatience is a wish, that God were depos'd from his Throne, that he would surrender his seat to some, that would deal more favourably, and be more punctual observers of our directions. Let us look to ourselves in regard of this sin which is too common, and the root of much mischief. This seems to be the first bubbling of *Adam's* will, he was not content with the condition wherein God had placed him, but affected another, which ended in the ruine of himself, and of Mankind.

3. *Limiting God in his way of working to our methods* is another part of the contempt of his dominion. When we will prescribe him methods of acting, that he should deliver us in this or that way, we would not suffer him to be the Lord of his own favors, and have the priviledg to be his own director. When we will limit him to such a time, wherein to work our deliverance, we would rob him of the power of times and seasons, which are solely in his hand. We would regulate his conduct according to our imaginations, and assume a power to give Laws to our Sovereign. Thus the *Israelites limited the holy one of Israel. Psal. 78. 41.* They would controul his absolute dominion, and of a Sovereign make him their slave. Man that is God's vassal, would set bounds to his Lord, and cease to be a servant, and commence Master, when he would give, not take directions from him. When God had given them *Manna*, and their fancies were weary of that delicious food, they would prescribe Heaven to rain down some other sort of food for them. When they wanted no sufficient provision in the Wilderness, they quarrell'd with God for bringing them out of *Egypt*, and not presently giving them a place of *Seed, of Figgs, Vines and Pomegranates. Numb. 20. 5.* which is call'd a *striving with the Lord, ver. 13.* a contending with him for his Lordship. When we tempt God, and require a sign of him as a mark of his favour, we circumscribe his dominion; when we will not use the means he hath appointed, but father our lazyness upon a trust in his providence, as if we expected he should work a miracle for our relief; when we censure him for what he hath done in the course of his providence; when we capitulate with him, and promise such a service, if he will do us such a good turn according to our platform, we would bring down his Sovereign pleasure to our will, we invade his Throne, and expect a submissive Obedience from him. Man that hath not wit enough to govern himself, would be governing God, and those that cannot be their own Sovereigns, affect a Sovereignty over Heaven.

4. *Pride and presumption* is another invasion of his dominion. When men will resolve to go to morrow to such a City, to such a Fair and Market, to traffick, and get gain, without thinking of the necessity of a Divine License, as if our selves were the Lords of our time, and of our lives, and God were to lacquy after us. *James 4. 13. 15. Ye that say, to day we will go into such a City, and buy and sell, whereas ye ought to say, if the Lord will we shall live;* As if they had a free hold, and were not Tenants at will to the Lord of the Manour. When we presume upon our own strength or wit, to get the better of our adversaries; As the *Germans* (as *Tacitus* relates) assur'd themselves by the numerousness of their Army of a victory against the *Romans*, and prepar'd chaines to fetter the Captives before the conquest, which were found in their camp after their defeat; When we are peremptory in expectations of success according to our will; As *Pharaoh, Exod. 15. 9. I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoyle, my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.* He speaks more like a God, than a man, as if he were the Sovereign power, and God only his Vicar and Lieutenant; How he struts, without thinking of a superiour power to curb him! When men ascribe to themselves what is the sole fruit of God's Sovereign pleasure. As the King of *Assyria* speaks a Language, fit only to be spoken by God. *Isa. 10. 13, 14. &c. I have removed the bounds of the people, my*  
F f f f f
hand



*hand hath found as a nest, the riches of the people, I have gathered all the earth;* which God declares to be a wrong to his Sovereignty by the title wherewith he prefaceth his threatening against him. *Jer. 16. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, send among his fat ones leanness, &c.* 'Tis indeed a rifling, if not of his Crown, yet of the most glittering Jewel of it, his Glory. *He that mocks the poor reproacheth his Maker, Prov. 17. 5.* He never thinks that God made them poor, and himself rich; He owns not his riches to be dropt upon him by the divine hand. Self is the great invader of God's Sovereignty, doth not only spurn at it, but usurp it, and assume divine honours, payable only to the Universal Sovereign. The *Assyrian* was not so modest as the *Chaldean*, who would impute his power and victories to his *Idol*, *Hab. 1. 11.* whom he thought to be God, though yet robbing the true God of his Authority; and so much was signified by their names, *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Ezil-Merodach*, *Belsazzar*, *Nebo*, *Merodach*, *Bel*, being the *Chaldean Idols*, and the names signifying Lord of wealth, giver of riches, and the like. When we behave our selves proudly towards others, and imagine our selves greater than our Maker ever meant us; When we would give Laws to others, and expect the most submissive observances from them, as if God had resign'd his Authority to us, and made us in his stead the rightful Monarchs of the World. To disdain that any creature should be above us, is to disdain God's Sovereign disposition of men, and consequently his own superiority over us. A proud man would govern all, and would not have God his Sovereign, but his Subject; to over-value our selves, is to under-value God.

5. *Slight and careless worship of God* is another contempt of his Sovereignty. A Prince is contemn'd, not only by a neglect of those reverential postures which are due to him, but in a reproachful and scornful way of paying them. To behave our selves uncomely or immodestly before a Prince is a dis-esteem of Majesty. Sovereignty requires awe in every address, where this is wanting there is a disrespect of Authority. We contemn God's Dominion when we give him the service of the Lip, the Hand, the Knee, and deny him that of the Heart; as they in *Ezekiel*, *Ezek. 33. 31.* as though he were the Sovereign only of the body, and not of the soul. To have devout figures of the face, and uncomely postures of the soul, is to exclude his dominion from our spirits, while we own it only over our outward man; we render him an insignificant Lord, not worthy of any higher adorations from us, than a senseless statue; We demean not our selves according to his Majestical Authority over us, when we present him not with the Cream and Quintessence of our souls. The greatness of God requir'd a great house, and a costly Palace; *1 Chron. 29. 11. 16.* *David* speaks it in order to the building God a house and Temple; God being a great King, expects a Male the best of our flock. *Mal. 1. 14.* a Masculine and vigorous service. When we present him with a sleepy, sickly, rheumatick service, we betray our conceptions of him to be as mean as if he were some petty Lord, whose dominion were of no larger extent than a Mole hill, or some inconsiderable Village.

6. *Omission of the service he hath appointed* is another contempt of his Sovereignty. This is a contempt of his dominion, whereby he hath a right to appoint what means and conditions he pleaseth, for the enjoyment of his proffered and promised benefits. 'Tis an enmity to his Scepter not to accept of his terms after a long series of precepts and invitations, made for the restoring us to that happiness we had lost, and providing all means necessary thereunto, nothing being wanting but our own concurrence with it, and acceptance of it, by rendering that easy homage he requires. By withholding from him the service he enjoins, we deny that we hold any thing of him; As he that payes not the quit rent, though it be never so small, disowns the Sovereignty of the Lord of the Manour; It implies that he is a miserable poor Lord, having no right, or destitute of any power, to dispose of any thing in the World to our advantage. *Job. 22. 17.* *They say unto God, depart from us, what can the Almighty do for them?* They will have no commerce with him in a way of duty, because they imagine him to have no

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Sovereign power to do any thing for them in way of benefit, as if his dominion were an empty title, and as much destitute of any Authority to command a favour for them, as any Idol. They think themselves to have as absolute a disposal of things, as God himself: What can he do for us? What can he confer upon us, that we cannot invest our selves in? As though they were Sovereigns in an equality with God: Thus men live *without God in the World*, *Eph. 2. 12.* as if there were no supream being to pay a respect to, or none fit to receive any homage at their hands: With-holding from God the right of his time, and the right of his service, which is the just claim of his Sovereignty.

7. *Censuring others* is a contempt of his Sovereignty. When we censure mens persons or actions by a rash judgment, when we will be judges of the good and evil of mens actions, where the law of God is utterly silent, we usurp God's place, and invade his right, we claim a superiority over the Law, and judge God defective as the rector of the World, in his prescriptions of good and evil; *Jam. 4. 11. 12.* *He that speaks evil of his Brother, and judgeth his Brother, speaks evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law; There is one Law-giver, who is able to save, and to destroy; Who art thou that judgest another? Do you know what you do in judging another? You take upon you the garb of a Sovereign, as if he were more your servant than God's, and more under your Authority than the Authority of God; 'tis a setting thy self in God's Tribunal, and assuming his rightful power of judging; thy Brother is not to be govern'd by thy fancy, but by God's Law, and his own Conscience.*

2. Information, Hence it follows *that God doth actually govern the World.* He hath not only a right to rule, but *he rules over all*, so saith the Text. He is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*; what to let them do what they please, and all that their lusts prompt them to? hath God an absolute Dominion? Is it good, and is it wise? Is it then a useless prerogative of the Divine Nature? Shall so excellent a power lye idle, as if God were a lifeless Image? Shall we fancy God like some lazy Monarch, that solaceth himself in the Gardens of his Palace, or steeps himself in some charming pleasures, and leaves his Lieutenants to govern the several Provinces, which are all Members of his Empire, according to their own humour? Not to exercise this Dominion is all one as not to have it; To what purpose is he invested with this Sovereignty, if he were careless of what were done in the world, and regarded not the oppressions of men? God keeps no useless excellency by him; He actually reigns over the Heathen, *Psal. 47. 8.* and those as bad, or worse than Heathens. It had been a vanity in *David* to call upon the Heavens to be glad, and the earth to rejoyce under the rule of a *sleepy Deity*, *1 Chron. 16. 31.* No, his Scepter is full of eyes, as it was painted by the *Egyptians*; He is always waking, and always more than *Alasbuerus*, reading over the records of Humane actions. Not to exercise his Authority, is all one, as not to regard whether he keep the Crown upon his head, or continue the Scepter in his hand. If his Sovereignty were exempt from care, it would be destitute of Justice; God is more Righteous, than to resign the ensigns of his Authority to blind and oppressive man; to think that God hath a power, and doth not use it for just and righteous ends, is to imagine himan unrighteous, as well as a careless Sovereign, such a thing in a man renders him a base man, and a worse Governor; 'Tis a vice that disturbs the World, and overthrows the ends of Authority, as to have a power, and use it well, is the greatest virtue of an Earthly Sovereign. What an unworthy conception is it of God, to acknowledge him to be possessed of a greater Authority than the greatest Monarch, and yet to think that he useth it less than a petty Lord, that his Crown is of no more value with him than a Feather? This represents God impotent, that he cannot, or unrighteous and base, that he will not administer the Authority he hath for the noblest and justest end. But can we say, that he neglects the government of the World? How come things then to remain in their due order? How comes the Law of nature yet to be preserved in every man's Soul? How comes Conscience to check, and cite, and judge? If God

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did not exercise his Authority, what Authority could Conscience have to disturb man in unlawful practices, and to make his sports and sweetness so unpleasant and sour to him? Hath he not given frequent notices and memorials, that he holds a curb over corrupt inclinations, puts rubs in the way of malicious attempters, and often oversets the disturbers of the peace of the World?

3. Information, *God can do no wrong*; since he is absolute sovereign. Man may do wrong, Princes may oppress, and rille, but it is a crime in them so to do: Because their power is a power of Government and not of propriety in the goods or lives of their subjects; but God cannot do any wrong, whatsoever the clamours of Creatures are: Because he can do nothing but what he hath a sovereign right to do. If he takes away your goods, he takes not away any thing that is yours, more than his own, since though he intrusted you with them, he devoted not himself of the propriety. When he takes away our lives, he takes what he gave us by a temporary donation, to be surrendered at his call. We can claim no right in any thing but by his will. He is no debtor to us, and since he owes us nothing, he can wrong us in nothing that he takes away. His own sovereignty excuseth him in all those acts, which are most distastful to the Creature. If we crop a medicinal plant for our use, or a flower for our pleasure, or kill a Lamb for our food, we do neither of them any wrong: Because the original of them was for our use, and they had their life, and nourishment, and pleasing qualities for our delight and support; and are not we much more made for the pleasure and use of God, than any of those can be for us? *Of him, and to him are all things, Rom. 11. 36.* Hath not God as much right over any one of us, as over the meanest Worm? Though there be a vast difference in nature between the Angels in Heaven, and the Worms on Earth, yet they are all one in regard of subjection to God; he is as much the Lord of the one, as the other; as much the proprietor of the one, as the other; as much the Governour of the one, as the other. Not a cranny in the World is exempt from his jurisdiction. Not a mite or grain of a Creature exempt from his propriety.

He is not our Lord by election; he was a Lord, before we were in being; he had no terms put upon him who capitulated with him, and set him in his Throne by Covenant. What Oath did he take to any subject at his first investiture in his Authority? His right is as natural, as eternal as himself. As natural as his existence, and as necessary as his Deity. Hath he any Law but his own will? What wrong can he do, that breaks no Law, that fulfils his Law in every thing he doth, by fulfilling his own will, which as it is absolutely sovereign, so it is infinitely righteous. In what soever he takes from us then, he cannot injure us; 'tis no crime in any man, to seize upon his own goods, to vindicate his own honour; and shall it be thought a wrong in God, to do such things? Besides the occasion he hath from every man, and that every day provoking him to do it. He seems rather to wrong himself by forbearing such a seizure, than wrong us by executing it.

4. If God have a sovereignty over the whole World, *then merit is totally excluded.* His right is so absolute over all Creatures, that he neither is, nor can be a debtor to any; not to the undefiled holiness of the blessed Angels, much less to poor earthly worms; those blessed Spirits enjoy their glory by the title of his sovereign pleasure, not by virtue of any obligation devolving from them upon God. Are not the faculties whereby they and we perform any act of obedience his grant to us? Is not the strength, whereby they and we are enabled to do any thing pleasing to him, a gift from him? Can a vassal merit of his Lord, or a slave of his Master by using his tools, and employing his strength in his service, though it was a strength he had naturally, not by donation from the man in whose service it is employ'd? God is Lord of all, all is due to him; how can we oblige him, by giving him what is his own, more his to whom it is presented, than ours by whom it is offered? \* He becomes not a debtor by receiving any thing from us, but by promising something to us.

5. If



5. If God hath a sovereign dominion over the whole World, then hence it follows, that *all Magistrates are but sovereigns under God*. He is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, all the Potentates of the World are no other than his Lieutenants, moveable at his pleasure, and more at his disposal, than their subjects are at theirs. Though they are dignified with the title of *Gods*, yet still they are at an infinite distance from the supream Lord. Gods under God, not to be above him, not to be against him. The want of the due sense of their subordination to God, hath made many in the World, act as sovereigns above him, more than sovereigns under him. Had they all bore a deep conviction of this upon their spirits, such audacious language had never dropt from the mouth of *Pharaoh, who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go?* *Exod. 5. 2.* Presuming that there was no superior to controul him, nor any in Heaven, able to be a match for him. *Darius* had never publish'd such a doting Edict, as to prohibit any petition to God. *Nero* had never fir'd *Rome*, and sung at the sight of the devouring flames; nor ever had he ript up his mothers belly, to see the Womb where he first lodg'd, and received a life so hateful to his Country. Nor would *Achaz* and *Joab* the two Generals have accounted the death of men but a sport and interlude. *2 Sam. 2. 14.* *Let the young men arise, and play before us*; what play it was, the next verse acquaints you with, thrusting their Swords into one anothers sides. They were no more troubled at the death of thousands, than a man is to kill a fly, or a flea. Had a sense of this but hover'd over their Souls, People in many Countries had not been made their foot-balls, and used worse than their dogs? Nor had the lives of millions worth more than a World, been expos'd to Fire and Sword, to support some sordid lust, or breach of Faith upon an idle quarrel, and for the depredation of their Neighbours estates; the flames of Cities had not been so bright, nor the streams of blood so deep, nor the cries of innocents so loud.

#### In Particular.

1. If God be sovereign, *All under-Sovereigns are not to rule against him, but to be obedient to his Orders*. If they rule by his Authority, *Prov. 8. 15.* they are not to rule against his interest, they are not to imagine themselves as absolute as God, and that their Laws must be of as sovereign Authority against his honour, as the Divine are for it. If they are his Lieutenants on Earth, they ought to act according to his Orders. No man but will account a Governour of a Province a Rebel, if he disobey the Orders sent him by the sovereign Prince that commission'd him. Rebellion against God is a crime of Princes, as well as Rebellion against Princes a Crime of Subjects. *Saul* is charg'd with it by *Samuel* in a high manner for an act of simple disobedience, though intended for the service of God, and the enriching his Country with the spoils of the *Amalekites*. *1 Sam. 15. 23.* *Rebellion is as the sin of Witchcraft*, like Witchcraft or Covenanting with the Devil, acting as if he had received his commission not from God, but from *Sathan*. Magistrates, as commission'd by God, ought to act for him. Doth humane authority ever give a Commission to any, to rebel against it self? did God ever depute any earthly sovereignty against his glory, and give them leave to out-law his Laws, to introduce their own? No, when he gave the vicarious dominion to Christ, he calls upon the Kings of the Earth, to be instructed, and be Wise, and kiss the Son, *Psal. 2. 10. 12. i. e.* To observe his orders, and pay him homage as their Governour. What a silly doltish thing is it, to resist that supream Authority, to which the Arch-Angels submit themselves, and regulate their employments punctually by their instructions? Those excellent Creatures exactly obey him in all the acts of their subordinate Government in the World; those in whose hand the greatest Monarch is no more than a silly fly between the fingers of a Giant. A contradiction to the interest of God hath been fatal to Kings. The four Monarchies have had their wings clipt, and most of them have been buried in their own ashes; they have all like the imitators of *Lucifers* pride fallen from the Heaven of their Glory to the depth of their shame and misery. All Governours are bound to be as much obedient to God, as their Subjects are bound,



bound to be submissive to them. Their Authority over men is limited, Gods Authority over them is absolute, and unbounded. Though every Soul ought to be subject to the higher powers, yet there is a higher power of all, to which those higher powers are to subject themselves; they are to be keepers of both the Tables of the Law of God, and are then most sovereigns when they set in their own practice an example of obedience to God, for their Subjects to write after.

2. *They ought to imitate God in the exercise of their sovereignty in ways of Justice and Righteousness.* Though God be an absolute sovereign, yet his Government is not *Tyrannical*, but managed according to the rules of Righteousness, Wisdom, and Goodness. If God that created them as well as their Subjects, doth so exercise his Government, 'tis a duty incumbent upon them, to do the same: Since they are not the Creators of their people, but the conductors. As Gods Government tends to the good of the World, so ought theirs to the good of their Countries. God committed not the government of the World to the Mediator in an unlimited way, but for the good of the Church, in order to the Eternal Salvation of his people. *Eph. 1. 22. He gave him to be head over all things to the Church.* He had power over the Devils, to restrain them in their temptation and malice; power over the Angels, to order their Ministry for the Heirs of Salvation. So power is given to Magistrates for the Civil preservation of the World and of humane Society: They ought therefore to consider, for what ends they are placed over the rest of mankind, and not exercise their Authority in a licentious way, but conformable to that Justice and Righteousness wherein God doth administer his government; and for the preservation of those who are committed to them.

2. *Magistrates must then be obeyed, when they act according to Gods order and within the bounds of the divine Commission.* They are no friends to the sovereignty of God, that are Enemies to Magistracy, his Ordinance. *Sam* was a good Governour, though none of the best men, and the despisers of his Government after Gods choice were the Sons of *Belial*. *1 Sam. 10. 27. Christ* was no Enemy to *Cæsar*. To pull down a faithful Magistrate such an one as *Zerubbabel*, is to pluck a signet from the hand of God: For in that capacity he accounts him. *Hag. 2. 23. Gods servants stand or fall to their own Master.* How doth he check *Aaron* and *Miriam* for speaking against *Moses* his servant. *Numb. 12. 8. Were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses; against Moses as related to you in the capacity of a Governour, against Moses as related to me in the capacity of my servant.* To speak any thing against them, as they act by Gods order, is an invasion of Gods sovereign right, who gave them their Commission. To act against just power or the justice of an Earthly power, is to act against Gods Ordinance, who ordained them in the World, but not any abuse, or ill use of their power.

2. *USE. How dreadful is the consideration of this doctrine to all rebels against God.* Can any man that hath brains in his head, imagine it an inconsiderable thing, to despise the sovereign of the World? It was the sole crime of disobedience to that positive Law, whereby God would have a visible memorial of his sovereignty preserved in the eye of Man, that showered down that deluge of misery, under which the World groans to this day. God had given *Adam* a Soul, whereby he might live as a rational Creature; and then gives him a Law, whereby he might live as a dutiful Subject: For God forbidding him to eat of the fruit of the Tree of knowledge of good and evil, declared his own supremacy over *Adam*, and his propriety in the pleasant World he had given him by his bounty; he let him know hereby, that man was not his own Lord, nor was to live after his own sentiments, but the directions of a superior. \* As when a great Lord builds a magnificent Palace, and brings in another to inhabit it, he reserves a small duty to himself, not of an equal value with the House, but for an acknowledgment of his own right, that the Tenant may know, he is not the Lord of it, but hath his grant by the liberality of another. God hereby gave *Adam* matter for a pure Obedience,

\* Chrysost. in  
Gen. Hom. 15.



ence, that had no foundation in his own Nature by any implanted Law; he was only in it, to respect the will of his *sovereign*, and to understand, that he was to live under the power of a higher than himself. There was no more moral evil in the eating of this fruit, as considered distinct from the command, than in eating of any other fruit in the Garden. Had there been no prohibition, he might with as much safety have fed upon it as upon any other. No Law of nature was transgressed in the act of eating of it, but the *sovereignty* of God over him was denied by him; and for this the death threatned was inflicted on him and his posterity: For though Divines take notice of other sins in the fall of *Adam*, yet God in his tryal chargeth him with none but this; and doth put upon his question an *Emphasis* of his own Authority. *Gen. 3. 11. Hast thou eaten of the Tree whereof I commanded ye, that thou shouldst not eat?* This I am displeased with, that thou shouldst disown my dominion over thy self, and this Garden. This was the inlet to all the other sins; as the acknowledgment of God's *sovereignty* is the first step to the practice of all the duties of a Creature, so the disowning his *sovereignty*, is the first spring of all the extravagancies of a Creature. Every sin against the sovereign Law-giver is worthy of Death. The Transgression of this positive command deserved death, and procured it to spread it self over the face of the World. God's dominion cannot be despis'd, without meriting the greatest punishment.

1. *Punishment necessarily follows upon the Doctrine of Sovereignty.* 'Tis a faint and a feeble Sovereignty, that cannot preserve it self, and vindicate its own wrongs against rebellious subjects; The height of God's dominion infers a vengeance on the contemners of it. If God be an Eternal King, he is an Eternal Judge. Since sin unlinks the dependance between God the Sovereign, and man the subject, if God did not vindicate the rights of his Sovereignty, and the Authority of his Law, he would seem to despise his own dominion, be weary of it, and not act the part of a good Governour. But God is tender of his prerogative, and doth most bestir himself when men exalt themselves proudly against him. *Exod. 18. 11. In the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he will be above them.* When *Pharaoh* thought himself a mate for God, and proudly rejected his commands, as if they had been the messages of some petty *Arabian* Lord, God rights his own Authority upon the life of his enemy by the ministry of the *Red Sea*. He turned a great King into a beast, to make him know, *that the most high ruled in the Kingdoms of men.* *Dan. 4. 16, 17. The demand is by the word of the Holy ones, to the intent that the living may know, that the most High ruleth in the Kingdoms of men;* And that by the Petitions of the Angels, who cannot endure that the Empire of God should be obscur'd, and diminish'd by the pride of man. Besides the tender respect he hath to his own glory, he is constantly presented with the solicitations of the Angels, to punish the proud ones of the earth, that darken the glory of his Majesty. 'Tis necessary for the rescue of his honour, and necessary for the satisfaction of his illustrious attendants, who would think it a shame to them, to serve a Lord that were always unconcern'd in the rebellions of his creatures, and tamely suffer their spurns at his Throne: and therefore there is a day wherein the *haughtiness* of man shall be bowed down, the Cedars of *Lebanon* over-thrown, and high Mountains levell'd, that *God may be exalted in that day.* *Isa. 2. 11, 12. &c.* Pride is a sin that immediately swells against God's Authority, this shall be brought down that God may be exalted; not that he should have a real exaltation, as if he were actually depos'd from his Government, but that he shall be manifested to be the Sovereign of the whole World. 'Tis necessary there should be a day to chase away those clouds that are upon his Throne, that the lustre of his Majesty may break forth to the confusion of all the children of pride that vaunt against him. God hath a dominion over us as a Law-giver, as we are his creatures, and a dominion over us in a way of Justice, as we are his criminals.

2. This punishment is *unavoidable*.

1. None can escape him. He hath the sole Authority over Hell and Death, the Keyes of both are in his hand; The greatest *Cesar* can no more escape him than



than the meanest Peasant; *Who art thou, O great Mountain before Zerubbabel?* Zac. 4. 7. The height of Angels is no match for him, much less that of the mortal grandees of the World; they can no more resist him than the meanest person; But are rather as the highest Steeples, the fittest marks for his crushing thunder. If he speaks the word, *the principalities of men come down, and the Crown of their glory.* Jer. 13. 18. He can take the *Mighty away in a moment* and that *without hands*, i. e. without instruments. Job. 34. 20. The strongest are like the feet of *Nebuchadnezzar's Image*, Iron and Clay, Iron to man, but Clay to God, to be crumbled to nothing.

2. *What comfort can be reapt from a creature, when the Sovereign of the World arms himself with terrors, and begins his visitation?* Isa. 10. 3. *What will you do in the day of visitation, to whom will you flee for help, and where will you leave your glory?* The torments from a Subject may be relieved by the Prince, but where can there be an appeal from the Sovereign of the World? Where is there any above him to controul him, if he will overthrow us; who is there to call him to account, and say to him, what dost thou? He works by an uncontrollable Authority, he needs not ask leave of any. Isa. 43. 13. *He works, and none can let it;* As when he will relieve, none can afflict; so when he will wound, none can relieve. If a King appoint the punishment of a rebel, the greatest Favorite in the Court cannot speak a comfortable word to him. The most beloved Angel in Heaven cannot sweeten and ease the spirit of a man, that the Sovereign power is set against to make the butt of his wrath. The Devils lye under his sentence, and wear their chains as marks of their condemnation, without hope of ever having them filed off, since they are laid upon them by the Authority of an unaccountable Sovereign.

3. *By his Sovereign Authority, God can make any creature the instrument of his vengeance;* He hath all the creatures at his beck, and can Commission any of them to be a dreadful scourge. *Strong winds and tempests fulfil his word:* Psal. 148. 8. *The Lightnings answer him at his call, and cry aloud here are we.* Job 38. 35. By his Sovereign Authority he can render *Locusts* as mischievous as *Lions*, forge the meanest creatures into Swords and Arrows, and commission the most despicable to be his Executioners; He can cut off joy from our spirits, and make our own hearts be our tormentors, our most confident friends our persecutors, our nearest relations to be his avengers; They are more his, who is their Sovereign, than ours, who place a vain confidence in them. Rather than *Abraham* shall want children, he can raise up stones, and adopt them into his Family; And rather than not execute his vengeance, he can array the stones in the streets, and make them his armed subjects against us. If he speak the word, a hair shall drop from our heads to choak us, or a vapour, congeal'd into Rheum in our heads, shall drop down, and putrifie our Vitals. He can never want weapons, who is Sovereign over the thunders of Heaven, and stones of the Earth, over every creature, and can by a Sovereign word turn our greatest comforts into curses.

3. *This Punishment must be terrible.* How doth *David*, a great King, sound in his body, prosperous in his Crown, and successful in his conquests; settled in all his Royal conveniences, groan under the wrathful touch of a greater King than himself, Psal. 6. Psal. 38. and his other Penitential Psalms; Not being able to give himself a writ of ease, by all the delights of his Palace and Kingdom. *If the wrath of a King be as the roaring of a Lion* to a poor subject, Prov. 19. 10. how great is the wrath of the King of Kings, that cannot be set forth by the terror of all the amazing vollies of thunder, that have been since the Creation, if the noise of all were gather'd into one single crack? As there is an unconceivable ground of joy in the special favour of so mighty a King, so is there of terror in his severe displeasure. Psal. 76. 12. *He is terrible to the Kings of the earth, with God is terrible Majesty.* What a folly is it then to rebel against so mighty a Sovereign?



III. USE of *Comfort*. The Throne of God drops hony and sweetness, as well as dread and terror; All his other attributes afford little relief, without this of his dominion, and Universal command; When therefore he speaks of his being the God of his people, he doth often preface it, with *the Lord thy God*; His Sovereignty as a Lord being the ground of all the comfort we can take in his federal relation as our God; Thy God, but Superior to thee; thy God, not as thy Cattle and Goods are thine, in a way of sole propriety, but a Lord too in a way of Sovereignty, not only over thee, but over all things else for thee. As the end of God's setting Earthly Governments, was for the good of the communities over which the Governours preside; So God exerciseth his Government for the good of the World, and more particularly for the good of the Church, over which he is a peculiar Governour.

1. *His love to his people is as great as his Sovereignty over them.* He stands not upon his Dominion with his people so much, as upon his affection to them; He would not be call'd *Baali, my Lord*, i. e. he would not be known only by the name of *Sovereignty*, but *Isbi, my Husband*, a name of Authority and *sweetness* together; *Hos. 2. 16. 19. &c.* He signifies, that he is not only the Lord of our spirits and bodies, but a Husband by a Marriage knot, admitting us to a nearness to him, and Communion of goods with him. Though he Majestically sits upon a high Throne, yet it is a Throne *encircled with a Rainbow*; *Ezek. 1. 28.* To shew, that his Government of his people, is not only in a way of absolute Dominion, but also in a way of federal relation. He seems to own himself their Subject, rather than their Sovereign, when he gives them a Charter to command him in the affairs of his Church; *Isa. 45. 11. Ask of me things to come, concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command you me.* Some read it by way of question, as a corrective of a saueyness; Do you ask of me things to come, and seem to command me concerning the works of my hands, as if you were more careful of my interest among my people, than I am, who have form'd them? But if this were the sense, it would seem to discourage an importunity of Prayer for publick deliverance; And therefore to take it according to our Translation, 'tis an exhortation to Prayer, and a mighty encouragement in the management and exercise of it. Urge me with my promise, in a way of humble importunity, and you shall find me as willing to perform my word, and gratifie your desires, as if I were rather under your Authority, than you under mine; As much as to say, if I be not as good as my word, to satisfy those desires that are according to my promise, implead me at my own Throne, and if I be failing in it, I will give Judgment against my self. Almost like Princes Charters, and gracious grants, *we grant such a thing against us, and our heirs*, giving the subject power to implead them, if they be not punctually observ'd by them. How is the love of God seen in his condescension below the Majesty of Earthly Governours! He that might command by the absoluteness of his Authority, doth not only do that, but intreats in the quality of a subject, as if he had not a fulness to supply us, but needed something from us for a supply of himself, *2 Cor. 5. 20. As though God did beseech you by us.* And when he may challenge as a due by the right of his propriety, what we bestow upon his poor, which are his Subjects as well as ours, he reckons it as a *loan to him*, as if what we had were more our own than his. *Prov. 19. 17.* He stands not upon his Dominion so much with us, when he finds us Conscientious in paying the duty we owe to him. He rules as a Father by Love, as well as by Authority; He enters into a peculiar Communion with poor Earthly Worms; plants his gracious Tabernacle among the troops of sinners, instructs us by his word, invites us by his benefits, admits us into his presence, is more desirous to bestow his smiles, than we to receive them; And acts in such a manner, as if he were willing to resign his Scepter into the hands of any that were possessed with more love and kindness to us than himself. This is the comfort of Believers.

2. *In his being Sovereign, his pardons carry in them a full security.* He that hath the Keyes of Hell and Death, pardons the crime, and wipes off the guilt. Who



can repeal the act of the chief Governour? What tribunal can null the decrees of an absolute Throne? *If. 43. 25. I, even I am he, that blots out thy transgressions for my names sake.* His *sovereign* dominion renders his mercy comfortable. The clemency of a Subject though never so great, cannot pardon; people may pity a criminal, while the Executioner tortures him, and strips him of his Life; but the clemency of the supream Prince establisheth a pardon. Since we are under the dominion of God, if he pardons, who can reverse it? If he doth not, what will the pardons of men profit us in regard of an eternal state? If God be a King for ever, then he whom God forgives, he in whom God reigns, shall live for ever. Else he would want Subjects on Earth, and have none of his lower Creatures, which he form'd upon the Earth, to reign over after the dissolution of the World; if his pardons did not stand secure he would after this Life, have no voluntary subjects that had formerly a being upon the Earth; he would be a King only over the damn'd Creatures.

3, *Corruptions will certainly be subdued in his voluntary subjects.* The Covenant, *I will be your God,* implies protection, government, and relief, which are all grounded upon Sovereignty: That therefore which is our greatest burden, will be remov'd by his Sovereign power. *Micah 7. 19. He will subdue our iniquities.* If the outward enemies of the Church shall not bear up against his Dominion, and perpetuate their rebellions unpunish'd, those within his people shall as little bear up against his Throne, without being destroy'd by him. The billows of our own hearts, and the raging waves within us, are as much at his beck as those without us. And his Sovereignty is more eminent in quelling the corruptions of the heart, than the commotions of the World; in reigning over mens Spirits, by changing them, or curbing them, more than over mens bodies, by pinching and punishing them. The remainders of *Satans* Empire will moulder away before him, since he that is *in us*, is a greater Sovereign, *than he that is in the World,* *1 Joh. 4. 4.* His enemies will be laid at his feet; and so never shall prevail against him, when his Kingdom shall come. He could not be Lord of any man as a happy creature, if he did not by his power make them happy; and he could not make them happy, unless by his Grace he made them holy. He could not be praised as a Lord of Glory, if he did not make some creatures glorious, to praise him; And an Earthly Creature could not praise him perfectly, unless he had every grain of enmity to his Glory taken out of his heart. Since God is the only Sovereign, he only can still the commotions in our spirits, and pull down all the Ensigns of the Devil's royalty; he can waite him by the powerful word of his lips.

4. Hence is a strong encouragement for Prayer. *My King* was the strong compellation *David* us'd in Prayer, as an argument of comfort and confidence, as well as that of *My God.* *Psal. 5. 2. Hearken to the voice of my cry, my King and my God.* To be a King, is to have an Office of Government and Protection. He gives us liberty, to approach to him as the Judge of all. *Heb. 12. 23. i. e.* As the Governour of the World; we pray to one that hath the whole Globe of Heaven and Earth in his hand, and can do whatsoever he will. Though he be higher than the *Cherubims*, and transcendently above all in Majesty, yet we may soar up to him with the wings of our Soul, Faith, and Love, and lay open our cause, and find him as gracious, as if he were the meanest subject on Earth, rather than the most sovereign God in Heaven.

He hath as much of tenderness, as he hath of Authority, and is pleased with Prayer, which is an acknowledgment of his Dominion, an honouring of that, which he delights to honour: For Prayer, in the notion of it, imports thus much, that God is the Rector of the World, that he takes notice of humane affairs, that he is a careful, just, wise Governour, a store-house of blessing, a fountain of goodness to the indigent, and a relief to the oppressed. What have we reason to fear, when the sovereign of the World gives us liberty to approach to him, and lay open our case? That God who is King of the whole Earth, not only of a few Villages, or Cities in the Earth, but the whole Earth; and not only King  
of



of this dreary place of our droil, but of Heaven having prepar'd, or establish'd his Throne in the most glorious place of the Creation.

5. Here is *comfort in afflictions*. As a *sovereign*, he is the Author of Afflictions, as a *parent*, he can be the remover of them: he can command the waters of affliction to go so far and no further. If he speaks the Word, a disease shall depart, as soon as a servant shall from your presence with a Nod. If we are banish'd from one place, he can command a shelter for us in another. If he orders *Mob*, a Nation that had no great kindness for his people, to let *his outcasts dwell with them*, they shall entertain them, and afford them sanctuary. *Isaiah* 16. 4. Again God chauneth as a *sovereign*, but teacheth as a *Father*. *Psal.* 99. 12. The exercise of his Authority is not without an exercise of his goodness. He doth not correct for his own pleasure, or the Creature's torment, but for the Creature's instruction; though the rod be in the hand of a *sovereign*, yet it is tinctur'd with the kindness of divine bowels. He can order them as a *sovereign* to mortifie our flesh, and try our Faith. In the severest tempest, the Lord that rais'd the Wind against us, which shatter'd the ship, and tore its rigging, can change that contrary wind for a more happy one, to drive us into the Port.

6. 'Tis a *comfort against the projects of the Churches adversaries in times of publick commotions*. The consideration of the Divine *sovereignty* may arm us against the threatnings of mighty ones, and the menaces of persecutors. God hath Authority above the Crowns of men, and a Wisdom superior to the cabals of men. None can move a step without him, he hath a negative voice upon their Counsels, a negative hand upon their motions; their politick resolves must stop at the point he hath prescrib'd them. Their formidable strength cannot exceed the limits he hath set them, their overreaching wisdom expires at the breath of God, *There is no Wisdom, nor Understanding, nor Counsel against the Lord.* *Prov.* 21. 30. Not a bullet can be discharg'd, nor a Sword drawn, a wall battered, nor a person dispatcht out of the world without the leave of God, by the mightiest in the World. The instruments of *Satan* are no more free from his *sovereign* restraint than their inspirer; they cannot pull the hook out of their nostrils, nor cast the bridle out of their mouths. This *sovereign* can shake the Earth, rend the Heavens, overthrow Mountains, the most Mountainous opposers of his interest. Though the Nations rush against his people like the rushing of many waters, *God shall reule them, they shall be chafed as the chaff of the Mountain before the Wind, and like a rolling thing before the Whirlwind.* *Isaiah* 17. 13. So doth he often burst in pieces the most mischievous designs, and conducts the oppress'd to a happy port. He often turns the severest tempests into a calm, as well as the most peaceful calm into a horrible storm. How often hath a well-rigg'd ship, that seem'd to spurn the Sea under her feet, and beat the waves before her to a foam, been swallowed up into the bowels of that Element, over whose back she rode a little before. God never comes to deliver his Church as a Governour, but in a wrathful posture. *Ezek.* 20. 32. *Surely with the Lord with a mighty hand, and with an out stretched arm, and with fury pour'd out will I rule over you; not with fury pour'd out upon the Church, but fury pour'd out upon her Enemies, as the words following evidence.* The Church he would bring out from the Countries where she was banish'd, and bring the people into the bond of the Covenant. He sometimes *cuts off the Spirits of Princes.* *Psal.* 76. 12. i. e. cuts off their designs, as men do the pipes of a water-course. The hearts of all are as open to him, as the riches of heaven where he resides. He can slip an inclination into the heart of the mighty, which they dream'd not of before; and if he doth not change their projects, he can make them abortive, and way-lay them in their attempts. *Satan* march'd with fury, but God put a padlock upon his passion against *Jacob*. *Gen.* 31. 24. 27. The *Devils* which ravage mens minds, must be still, when he gives out his *sovereign* orders. This *sovereign* can make his people *find favour* in the eyes of the cruel *Egyptians*, which had so long oppress'd them. *Exod.* 11. 3. And speak a good word in the heart of *Nebuchadnezzar* for the Prophet *Jeremy*,



that he should order his Captain, to take him into his special protection; when he took *Zedekiah* away prisoner *in chains* and *put out his eyes*. *Jerem. 39. 11.* His people cannot want deliverance from him, who hath all the world at his command, when he is pleased, to bestow it: he hath as many instruments of deliverance, as he hath Creatures at his beck in Heaven or Earth from the meanest to the highest. As he is the *Lord of Hosts*, the Church hath not only an interest in the strength he himself is possessed with, but in the strength of all the Creatures that are under his command, in the Elements below and Angels above; in those armies of Heaven, and in the inhabitants of the Earth, he doth *what he will*; *Dan. 4. 35.* They are all in order, and array at his command. There are Angels to employ in a fatal stroke, Lice and Frogs to quell the stubborn hearts of his Enemies. He can range his Thunders and Lightnings, the Canon and Grando's of Heaven, and the Worms of the Earth in his service. He can muzzle Lions, calm the fury of the Fire, turn his Enemies Swords into their own bowels, and their Artillery on their own breasts; set the wind in their Teeth, and make their Chariot-wheels languish, make the Sea enter a quarrel with them, and wrap them in its waves, till it hath stifled them in its lap. The Angels have *Storms, and Tempests and Warrs* in their hands, but at the disposal of God; when they shall cast them out against the Empire of Antichrist *Rev. 7. 1, 2.* then shall *Satan* be discharg'd from his Throne, and no more seduce the Nations; the everlasting Gospel shall be preached, and God shall reign gloriously in *Sion*. Let us therefore shelter our selves in the divine *soveraignty*, regard God as the *most High* in our dangers, and in our petitions. This was *Dauids* resolution. *Psal. 57. 1, 2. I will cry unto unto God most high.* This *Dominion of God* is the true *Tower of David*, wherein there are a thousand shields for defence and encouragement. *Cant. 4. 4.*

IV. USE. If God hath an extensive Dominion over the whole World, *this ought to be often meditated on, and acknowledged by us.* This is the universal duty of mankind; if he be the *soveraign* of all, we should frequently think of our great Prince, and acknowledge our selves his Subjects, and him our Lord. God will be acknowledg'd the Lord of the whole Earth, the neglect of this is the cause of the Judgments which are sent upon the World. All the *Prodigies* were to this end, that they might know, or acknowledge that *God was the Lord*. *Exod. 10. 2.* As God was proprietor, he demanded the *first-born* of every *Jem*, and the first-born of every *Beast*, the one was to be Redeemed, and the other Sacrificed; this was the Quit-Rent they were to pay to him for their fruitful Land. The first Fruits of the Earth were ordered to be paid to him, as a homage due to the Landlord, and an acknowledg'ment they held all in chief of him. The practice of offering first-fruits for an acknowledg'ment of Gods *soveraignty* was among many of the *Heathens*, and very ancient; hence they dedicated some of the chief of their spoils, owning thereby the Dominion and Goodness of God, whereby they had gain'd the Victory. *Cain* own'd this in offering the Fruits of the Earth, and it was his sin, he own'd no more, *viz.* His being a sinner, and meriting the Justice of God, as his Brother *Abel* did in his bloody Sacrifice. God was a *soveraign* Proprietor and Governour, while man was in a state of innocence, but when man proved a Rebel, the *soveraignty* of God bore another relation towards him, that of a Judge, added to the other. The First-fruits might have been offered to God in a state of innocence, as a homage to him as Lord of the Manour of the World; the design of them was to own Gods propriety in all things, and mens dependance on him for the influences of heaven in producing the fruits of the Earth, which he had ordered for their use. The design of Sacrifices, and placing beasts instead of the criminal, was to acknowledg their own guilt, and God as a *soveraign* Judge; *Cain* own'd the *first*, but not the *second*, he acknowledged his dependance on God as a proprietor, but not his obnoxiousness to God as a Judge, which may be probably gathered from his own speech, when God came to examine him, and ask him for his Brother. *Gen. 4. 9. Am I my Brothers keeper?* Why do you ask me; though I own thee as the Lord of my Land, and Goods, yet I do not



not think my self accountable to thee for all my actions. This Sovereignty of God ought to be acknowledged in all the parts of it, in all the manifestations of it to the creature. We should bear a sense of this always upon our Spirits, and be often in the thoughts of it in our retirements. We should fancy that we saw God upon his Throne in his Royal Garb, and great attendants about him, and take a view of it, to imprint an awe upon our Spirits.

The meditation on this would,

1. *Fix us on him as an object of trust.* 'Tis upon his Sovereign Dominion as much as upon any thing, that safe and secure confidence is built; for if he had any superior above him, to controul him in his designs and promises, his veracity and power would be of little efficacy, to form our souls to a close adherency to him. It were not fit to make him the object of our trust, that can be gainsaid by a higher than himself, and had not a full Authority to answer our expectations; If we were possessed with this notion fully and believingly, that God were *high above all*, that *his Kingdom rules over all*, we should not catch at every broken reed, and stand gaping for comforts from a pebble stone. He that understands the Authority of a King, would not wave a reliance on his promise, to depend upon the breath of a changeling favorite. None but an ignorant man would change the security he may have upon the height of a Rock, to expect it from the dwarfishness of a Mole-hill. To put confidence in any inferiour Lord, more than in the Prince, is a folly in civil converse, but a rebellion in Divine; God only being above all, can only rule all, can command things to help us, and check other things which we depend on, and make them fall short of our expectations. The due consideration of this Doctrine would make us pierce through *second* causes to the *first*, and look further than to the smaller sort of Sailers, that clime the ropes, and dress the Sails, to the Pilot that sits at the Helm, the Master, that by an indisputable Authority orders all their motions. We should not depend upon *second causes* for our support, but look beyond them to the Authority of the Deity, and the dominion he hath over all the works of his hands. *Zach. 10. 1. Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain*; When the seasons of the year conspire for the producing such an effect, when the usual time of rain is wheel'd about in the year, stop not your thoughts at the point of the Heavens, whence you expect it, but pierce the Heavens, and sollicite God, who must give order for it, before it comes. The due meditation of all things depending on the Divine Dominion, would strike off our hands from all other holds, so that no creature would engross the dependance and trust which is due to the first cause; As we do not thank the Heavens when they pour out rain, so we are not to depend upon them when we want it; God is to be sought to when the Womb of 2d. causes is open'd to relieve us, as well as when the Womb of 2d. causes is barren, and brings not forth its wonted progeny.

2. It would make us *diligent in worship*. The consideration of God as the supreme Lord, is the Foundation of all Religion; *Our Father which art in Heaven*, prefaceth the Lord's Prayer; *Father* is a name of *Authority*; in *Heaven*, the place where he hath fixed his Throne, notes his *Government*; not *my* Father, but *our* Father, notes the *extent* of this Authority. In all worship we acknowledge the *object* of our worship, *our Lord*, and our selves his vassals; If we bear a sense that he is our Sovereign King, it would draw us to him in every exigence, and keep us with him in a reverential posture, in every address; When we come we should be careful not to violate his right, but render him the homage due to his Royalty. We should not appear before him with empty souls, but fill'd with Holy thoughts. We should bring him the best of our flock, and present him with the prime of our strength; Were we sensible we hold all of him, we should not withhold any thing from him, which is more worthy than another. Our hearts would be fram'd into an awful regard of him, when we consider that glorious and *fearful* name, *the Lord our God*, *Deut. 28. 58*. We should *look to our feet*, when we enter into his house, if we considered him in *Heaven* upon his Throne, and our  
selves



selves on *Earth* at his Footstool, *Eccles. 5. 2.* lower before him than a worm before an Angel; It would hinder garishness and lightness. The Jews said *Capel*, on the *1 Tim. 1. 17.* repeat this expression, *מלך העולם King of Worlds*, or Eternal King; Probable the first Original of it might be, to stake them down from wandering. When we consider the Majesty of God clothed with a Robe of light, sitting upon his high Throne, adorn'd with his Royal Ensigns, we should not enter into the presence of so great a Majesty with the Sacrifice of fools, with light motions and foolish thoughts, as if he were one of our companions to be drol'd with. We should not hear his word, as if it were the voice of some ordinary Peasant. The consideration of Majesty, would engender reverence in our services. It would also make us speak of God with honour and respect, as of a great and glorious King, and not use defaming expressions of him, as if he were an infamous being. And were he consider'd as a terrible Majesty, he would not be frequently solicited by some, to pronounce a damnation upon them, upon every occasion.

3. It would make us *charitable to others*. Since he is our Lord, the great proprietor of the World, 'tis fit he should have a part of our goods, as well as our time: he being the Lord both of our goods and time. The Lord is to be honour'd with our *substance*; *Prov. 3. 9.* Kings were not to be approached to without a present; Tribute is due to Kings: but because he hath no need of any from us, to bear up his state, maintain the charge of his wars, or pay his Military Officers and Host, 'tis a debt due to him, to acknowledge him in his poor, to sustain those that are a part of his substance; Though he stands in no need of it himself, yet the poor, that we have always *with us*, do; *Asa 7th.* part of our weekly time, to some part of our weakly gains are due to him. There was to be a weekly laying by in store *somewhat* of what God had *prosper'd them*, for the relief of others. *1 Cor. 16. 1, 2.* the quantity is not determin'd, that is left to every man's Conscience, *according as God hath prosper'd him* that week. If we did consider God as the donor and proprietor, we should dispose of his gifts according to the design of the true owner, and act in our places as Stewards intrusted by him, and not purse up his part as well as our own in our coffers. We should not deny him a small quit rent, as an acknowledgment that we have a greater income from him; We should be ready to give the inconsiderable pittance, he doth require of us, as an acknowledgment of his propriety, as well as liberality.

4. It would *make us watchfull, and arm us against all temptations*. Had Eve stuck to her first Argument against the Serpent, she had not been instrumental to that destruction, which Mankind yet feel the smart of. *Gen. 3. 3.* *God hath said, ye shall not eat of it*; The great Governour of the World hath laid his Sovereign command upon us in this point. The temptation gain'd no ground, till her heart let go the sense of this for the pleasure of her eye and palate. The repetition of this, the great Lord of the World hath said, or order'd, had both unargumented and disarm'd the Tempter. A sense of God's Dominion over us would discourage a temptation, and put it out of countenance; It would bring us with a vigorous strength to beat it back to a retreat; If this were as strongly urg'd as the temptation, it would make the heart of the tempted strong, and the motion of the tempter feeble.

5. It would *make us entertain afflictions, as they ought to be entertain'd, viz. with a respect to God*. When men make light of any affliction from God, 'tis a contempt of his Sovereignty, as to contemn the frown, displeasure and check of a Prince, is an affront to Majesty: 'Tis, as if they did not care a straw what God did with them, but dare him to do his worst. There is a *despising the chastening of the Almighty*. *Job 5. 17.* To be unhumbled under his hand, is as much or more affront to him, than to be impatient under it. Afflictions must be entertained as a check from Heaven, as a frown from the great Monarch of the World; Under the feeling of every stroke, we are to acknowledge his Sovereignty and Bounty,



Bounty; to despise it, is to make light of his Authority over us; As to despise his favours, is to make light of his kindness to us. A sense of God's Dominion would make us observe every check from him, and not diminish his Authority, by casting off a due sense of his correction.

6. This Dominion of God would make us *reign up our selves to God in every thing*. He that considers himself a thing made by God, a vassal under his Authority, would not expostulate with him, and call him to an account why he hath dealt so, or so with him. It would stab the vitals of all pleas against him. We should not then contest with him, but humbly lay our cause at his feet, and say with *Eli*, 1 Sam. 3. 18. *'Tis the Lord, let him do what seems good*. We should not commence a suit against God, when he doth not answer our Prayers presently, and send the mercy we want upon the wings of the wind; He is the Lord, the Sovereign: The consideration of this would put an end to our quarrels with God; Should I expect that the Monarch of the World should wait upon me, or a poor worm wait upon him? Must I take State upon me before the Throne of Heaven, and expect the King of Kings should lay by his Scepter, to gratifie my humour? Surely *Jonah* thought God no more than his fellow, or his vassal, at that time when he told him to his face, he did well to be angry, as though God might not do what he pleased with so small a thing as a Gourd; He speaks as if he would have sealed a lease of ejection, to exclude him from any propriety in any thing in the World.

7. This Dominion of God would *stop our vain curiosity*. When *Peter* was desirous to know the fate of *John* the Beloved Disciple, Christ answereth no more than this. *Joh. 21. 22. If I will, that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me*. Consider your duty, and lay aside your curiosity, since it is my pleasure not to reveal it. The sense of God's absolute Dominion would silence many vain disputes in the World; What if God will not reveal this or that? the manner and method of his resolves should humble the Creature under intruding enquiries.

#### V. USE of Exhortation.

1. The Doctrine of the Dominion of God, *may teach us Humility*. We are never truly abas'd, but by the consideration of the eminence and excellency of the Deity. *Job* never thought himself so pitiful a thing, so despicable a creature, as after God's magnificent declamation upon the Theme of his own Sovereignty. *Job 42. 5, 6*. When God's name is regarded as the most excellent and Sovereign name in all the earth, then is the Soul in the fittest temper to lie low, and cry out, what is man, that so great a Majesty should be mindful of him? When *Abraham* considers God as the Supream Judge of all the earth, he then owns himself but dust and ashes. *Gen. 18. 25, 27*. Indeed, how can vile and dusty man vaunt before God, when the Angels, far more excellent creatures cannot stand before him, but with a Vail on their faces? How little a thing is man in regard of all the earth? How mean a thing is the earth in regard of the vaster Heavens? How poor a thing is the whole World in comparison of God? How pitiful a thing is man, if compar'd with so excellent a Majesty? There is as great a distance between God and man, as between being and not being, and the more man considers the Divine Royalty, the more dis-esteem he will have of himself, it would make him stoop and disrobe himself, and fall low before the Throne of the King of Kings, throwing down before his Throne, any Crown he gloryed in. *Rev. 4. 10*.

1. In regard of Authority. How unreasonable is pride in the presence of Majesty? How foolish is it for a Country Justice of Peace, to think himself as great as his Prince that Commission'd him? How unreasonable is pride in the presence of the greatest Sovereignty? What is humane greatness before Divine? The Stars discover no light when the Sun appears, but in a humble posture withdraw in their lesser Beams, to give the sole Glory of enlightning the World to the Sun, who is as it were the Sovereign of those Stars, and imparts a light unto them. The greatest Prince is infinitely less, if compar'd with God, than the meanest scullion in his



his kitchen can be before him. As the Wisdom, Goodness, and Holiness of man is a meer mote, compared to the Goodness and Holiness of God, so is the Authority of man a meer trifle in regard of the sovereignty of God. And who but a simple Child would be proud of a mote, or trifle. Let man be as great as he can, and command others, he is still a subject to one greater than himself. Pride would then vanish like smoke at the serious consideration of this sovereignty.

One of the Kings of this Country did very handsomly shame the flattery of his Courtiers, that cried him up as Lord of Sea and Land, by ordering his chair to be set on the Sand of the Sea shoar, when the Tide was coming in, and commanding the waters not to touch his feet, which when they did without any regard to his Authority, he took occasion thereby to put his flatterers out of countenance, and instruct himself in a lesson of humility; See, saith he, *how I rule all things, when so mean a thing as the water will not obey me.* 'Tis a ridiculous pride that the Turk and Persian discover in their swelling Titles. What poor sovereigns are they, that cannot command a Cloud, give out an effectual order for a drop of Rain, in a time of drought, or cause the bottles of Heaven, to turn their mouth another way in a time of too much moisture. Yet their own Prerogatives are so much in their minds, that they juggle out all thoughts of the supreme Prerogative of God, and give thereby occasion to frequent Rebellions against him.

\* Raynard de  
Deo p. 755.

2. In regard of *Propriety*. And this doctrine is no less an abatement of pride in the highest, as well as in the meanest, it lowers pride in point of *Propriety*, as well as in point of *Authority*. \* Is any proud of his possessions, how many Lords of those possessions have gone before you? How many are to follow you? Your Dominion lasts but for a short time, too short, to be a cause of any pride and glory in it. God by a sovereign power can take you from them, or them from you, when he pleaseth. The Traveller refresheth himself in the heat of Summer under a shady Tree; how many have done so before him the same day, he knows not, and how many will have the benefit after, before night comes, he is as much ignorant of; he and the others that went before him, and follow after him, use it for their refreshment, but none of them can say, they are the Lords of it. The property is invested in some other person, whom perhaps they know not; the propriety of all you have, is in God, not truly in your selves. Doth not that man deserve scorn from you, who will play the proud fool in gay Clothes and attire, which are known to be none of his own, but borrowed? Is it not the same case with every proud man, though he hath a property in his Goods by the Law of the Land? Is any thing you have your own truly? Is it not lent you by the great Lord? Is it not the same vanity in any of you, to be proud of what you have as Gods loan to you, as for such a one to be proud of what he hath borrowed of man. And do you not make your selves as ridiculous to Angels, and good Men who know, that though it is yours in opposition to man, yet it is *not yours* in opposition to God, they are granted you only for your use, as the *Collar of Esses and Sword*, and other Ensigns of the chief Magistrate in the City, pass through many hands in regard of the use of them, but the propriety remains in the Community and body of the City. Or as the Silver plate of a person that invites you to a Feast, is for your use during the time of the invitation. What ground is there, to be proud of those things, you are not the absolute Lords and Proprietors of, but only have the use of them granted to you, during the pleasure of the sovereign of the World?

2. *Praise and Thankfulness results from this doctrine of the Sovereignty of God.*

1. *He is to be praised for his royalty.* 'Psal. 145. 1. *I will extol thee my God, Oh King.* The Psalmist calls upon men five times, to sing praise to him as the King of all the Earth. 'Psal. 47. 6, 7. *Sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises to our King, sing praises: For God is the King of all the Earth, sing ye praises with understanding.* All Creatures even the inanimate ones are called upon to praise him, because of the excellency of his Name and the supremacy of his Glory in the 148. Psal.



*Pfal.* throughout and ver. 13. That *sovereign* power that gave us hearts and tongues, deserves to have them employ'd in his praises especially since he hath by the same hand, given us so great matter for it. As he is a *sovereign* we owe him thankfulness, he doth not deal with us in a way of absolute Dominion, he might then have annihilated us: Since he hath as full a Dominion to reduce us to nothing, as to bring us out of nothing. Consider the absoluteness of his sovereignty in it self, and you must needs acknowledge, that he might have multipl'd precepts, enjoyned us the observance of more than he hath done, he might have made our tedder much shorter, he might exact obedience, and promise no reward for it; he might dash us against the walls, as a Potter doth his Vessel, and no man have any just reason to say, what dost thou? Or why dost thou use me so? A greater right is in him to use us in such a manner, as we do sensible, as well as insensible things. And if you consider his dominion, as it is capable to be exercised in a way of unquestionable Justice, and submitted to the reason and judgments of Creatures, he might have dealt with us in a smarter way, than he hath hitherto done; instead of *one* affliction we might have had *a thousand*. He might have shut his own hands from pouring out any good upon us, and ordered innumerable scourges to be prepared for us; but he deals not with us according to the rights of his Dominion. He doth not oppress us by the greatness of his Majesty; he enters into Covenant with us, and allures us by the Cords of a man, and shews himself as much a merciful as an absolute *sovereign*.

2. *As he is a Proprietor we owe him thankfulness.* He is at his own choice, whether he will bestow upon us any blessings or no, the more value therefore his benefits deserve from us, and the Donor the more sincere returns. If we have any thing from the Creature to serve our turn, 'tis by the order of the chief proprietor. He is the spring of honour, and the fountain of supplies; all Creatures are but as the conduit pipes in a great City, which serve several houses with water, but from the great spring. All things are conveyed originally from his own hand, and are dispensed from his Exchequer. If this great *sovereign* did not order them, you would have no more supplies from a Creature, than you could have nourishment from a chip. 'Tis the Divine will in every thing that doth us good, every favour from Creatures is but a smile from God, an evidence of his Royalty to move us to pay a respect to him as the great Lord. Some *Heathens* had so much respect for God, as to conclude that his Will and not their own prudence, was the chief conductor of their affairs. His Goodness to us calls for our thankfulness, but his sovereignty calls for a higher elevation of it; a smile from a Prince is more valued, and thought worthy of more gratitude, than a present from a Peasant. A small gift from a great person is more gratefully to be received, than a larger from an inferior person. The condescension of Royalty magnifies the gift. What is *man*, that thou so great a Majesty, art mindful of him, to bestow this or that favour upon him, is but a due reflection upon every blessing we receive? Upon every fresh blessing we should acknowledge the donor, and true proprietor, and give him the honour of his Dominion. His property ought to be thankfully own'd, in every thing we are capable of consecrating to him. As *David* after the liberal collection he had made for the building of the Temple, own's in his dedication of it to that use the propriety of God. *1 Chron. 29. 14. Who am I? and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.* It was but a return of Gods own to him, as the waters of the River are no other than the return to the Sea, of what was taken from it.

Praise and Thankfulness is a Rent due from all mankind, and from every Creature to the great Landlord, since all are Tenants, and hold by him at his Will. Every Creature in Heaven and Earth, under the Earth, and in the Sea, were heard by *John* to ascribe blessing, honour, glory, and power to him that sits on the Throne. *Rev. 5. 13.* We are as much bound to the sovereignty of God for his preservation of us, as for his Creation of us. We are no less oblig'd to him, that preserves our beings, when expos'd to dangers, than we are for bestowing a being upon us,

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when we were not capable of danger. Thankfulness is due to this Sovereign for publick concerns; Hath he not preserved the *Ship* of his Church in the midst of whistling winds, and roaring waves, in the midst of the combats of men and Devils, and rescued it often, when it hath been near ship-wrackt?

3. How should we be induc'd from hence *to promote the honour of this Sovereign*? We should advance him as supream, and all our actions should concur in his honour. We should return to his Glory, what we have receiv'd from his Sovereignty, and enjoy by his mercy: He that is the superior of all, ought to be the end of all. This is the harmony of the Creation, that which is of an inferiour nature, is order'd to the service of that which is of a more excellent nature, thus water and earth, that have a lower being, are employ'd for the honour and beauty of the plants of the earth, who are more excellent in having a principle of a growing life; These plants are again subservient to the beasts and birds, which exceed them in a principle of sense, which the others want; Those beasts and birds are order'd for the good of man, who is superior to them in a Principle of reason, and is invested with a Dominion over them; Man having God for his superior, ought as much to serve the glory of God, as other things are design'd to be useful to man. Other Governments are intended for the good of the Community, the chief end is not the good of the Governours themselves; But God being every way Sovereign, the Sovereign being, giving being to all things, the Sovereign Ruler, giving order and preservation to all things, is also the end of all things, to whose glory and honour all things, all creatures are to be subservient. *Rom. 11. 36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever.* Of him as the efficient cause, through him as the preserving cause, to him as the final cause; All our actions and thoughts ought to be address'd to his glory, our whole beings ought to be consecrated to his honour, though we should have no reward, but the honour of having been subservient to the end of our Creation; So much doth the excellency and Majesty of God, infinitely elevated above us, challenge of us. Subjects use to value the safety, honour and satisfaction of a good Prince above their own; *David* is accounted worth 10000 of the people, and some of his Courtiers thought themselves oblig'd to venture their lives for his satisfaction in so mean a thing, as a little water from the Well of *Bethlehem*. Both not so great, so good a Sovereign as God, deserve the same affection from us? *Do we swear, saith a Heathen, \* to prefer none before Caesar, and have we not greater reason, to prefer none before God?* 'Tis a Justice due from us to God, to maintain his Glory, as it is a Justice to preserve the right and property of another. As God would lay aside his Deity, if he did deny himself, so a creature acts irregularly, and out of the rank of a creature, if it doth not deny it self for God. He that makes himself his own end, makes himself his own Sovereign. To napkin up a gift he hath bestow'd upon us, or to employ what we possess, solely to our own Glory, to use any thing barely for our selves, without respect to God, is to apply it to a wrong use, and to injure God in his propriety, and the end of his donation. What we have, ought to be us'd for the honour of God; He retains the Dominion and Lordship, though he grants us the use; We are but Stewards, not Proprietors, in regard of God who expects an account from us, how we have employ'd his goods to his honour. The Kingdom of God is to be advanced by us, we are to pray that his *Kingdom may come*, we are to endeavour that his Kingdom may come, that is, that God may be known to be the chief Sovereign, that his Dominion, which was obscur'd by *Adam's* fall, may be more manifested, that his Subjects which are suppress'd in the World, may be supported, his Laws which are violated by the rebellions of men, may be more obeyed, and his enemies be fully subdued by his final judgment, the last evidence of his Dominion in this State of the World, that the Empire of sin and the Devil may be abolish'd, and the Kingdom of God be perfected, that none may rule but the great and rightful Sovereign. Thus while we endeavour to advance the honour of his Throne, we shall not want an honour to our selves. He is too gracious a Sovereign to neglect them, that are mindful of his Glory; *those that honour him, he will honour*; 1 Sam. 2. 30.

\* *Arrian in Epictet.*

4. Fear



4. *Fear and reverence of God in himself, and in his actions*, is a duty incumbent on us from this Doctrine. *Jer. 10. 7. Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations!* The ingratitude of the World is taxt, in not reverencing God as a great King, who had given so many marks of his Royal Government among them. The *Prophet* wonders, there was no fear of so great a King in the World; Since among all the wise men of the Nations, and among all their Kings, there is none like unto this; No more reverence of him, since none ruled so wisely, nor any ruled so graciously. The dominion of God is one of the first sparks, that gives fire to Religion and Worship, consider'd with the goodness of this Sovereign. *Psal. 22. 27. 28. All the Nations shall worship before thee, for the Kingdom is the Lord's, and he is Governour among the Nations.* *Epicurus*, who thought God careless of humane affairs, leaving them at hap-hazard to the conduct of mens wisdom, and mutability of fortune, yet acknowledged, that God ought to be worshipped by man for the excellency of his nature, and greatness of his Majesty. How should we reverence that God, that hath a Throne encompass't with such Glorious Creatures as Angels, whose faces we are not able to behold though shadow'd in assum'd bodies! How should we fear the Lord of Hosts, that hath so many Armies at his command in the Heavens above, and in the Earth below, whom he can dispose to the exact obedience of his will; how should men be afraid to censure any of his actions, to sit judge of their Judge, and call him to an account to their Bar; How should such an earth-worm, a mean animal as man, be afraid to speak irreverently of so great a King among his pots and Strumpets! Not to fear him, not to reverence him, is to pull his Throne from under him, and make him of a lower Authority than our selves, or any creature that we reverence more.

5. *Prayer to God, and trust in him* is inferr'd from his Sovereignty. If he be the supream Sovereign, holding Heaven and Earth in his hand, disposing all things here below, not committing every thing to the influence of the stars, or the humours of men: we ought then to apply our selves to him in every case, implore the exercise of his Authority, we hereby own his peculiar right over all things and persons. He only is the supream head in all causes, and over all persons; *Thine is the Kingdom* concludes the Lord's Prayer, both as a motive to pray, *Mat. 6. 13.* and a ground to expect what we want. He that believes not God's Government, will think it needless to call upon him, will expect no refuge under him in a strait, but make some creature-reed his support. If we do not seek to him, but rely upon the dominion we have over our own possessions, or upon the Authority of any thing else, we disown his Supremacy and Dominion over all things, we have as good an opinion of our selves, or of some creature, as we ought to have of God. We think our selves, or some natural cause we seek to, or depend upon, as much Sovereigns as he, and that all things which concern us, are as much at the dispose of an inferior, as of the great Lord. 'Tis indeed to make a God of our selves, or of the Creature: When we seek to him upon all occasions, we own this divine eminency, we acknowledge that it is by him mens hearts are order'd, the World govern'd, all things dispos'd; And God that is jealous of his glory, is best pleas'd with any duty in the creature, that doth acknowledge and desire the glorification of it, which Prayer and dependance on him doth in a special manner; Desiring the exercise of his Authority, and the preservation of it in ordering the affairs of the World.

6. *Obedience* naturally results from this Doctrine, As his justice requires fear, his goodness thankfulness, his faithfulness trust, his truth belief, so his Sovereignty in the nature of it demands Obedience. As it is most fit he should rule in regard of his excellency: so it is most fit we should obey him in regard of his Authority. He is our Lord, and we his Subjects, he is our Master, and we his servants; 'tis righteous we should observe him, and conform to his will. He is every thing, that speaks an Authority to command us, and that can challenge an humility in us to obey. As that is the truest Doctrine, that subjects us most to God, so he is the truest Christian, that doth in his practice most acknowledge this subjecti-



on. And as sovereignty is the first notion a Creature can have of God, so obedience is the first and chief thing<sup>\*</sup> Conscience reflects upon the Creature. Man holds all of God: and therefore owes all the operations capable to be produced by those faculties to that sovereign power that endowed him with them. Man had no being but from him, he hath no motion without him; he should therefore have no being but for him, and no motion but according to him. To call him Lord, and not to act in subjection to him, is to mock, and put a scorn upon him. *Luk. 6. 46. Why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?* 'Tis like the Crucifying Christ under the Title of a King. 'Tis not by professions, but by observance of the Laws of a Prince, that we manifest a due respect to him. By that we reverence that Authority, that enacted them, and the prudence that fram'd them.

This doctrine affords us *motives* to obey and directs us to the *manner* of Obedience.

1. *Motives to obey.*

1. *'Tis Comely and Orderly.* Is it not a more becoming thing to be ruled by the will of our sovereign, than by that of our lusts? To observe a wise and gracious Authority, than to set up inordinate appetites in the room of his Law? Would not all men account it a disorder, to be abominated, to see a slave or vassal controul the just orders of his Lord, and endeavour to subject his Masters will to his own? Much more to expect, God should serve our humour, rather than we be regulated by his Will? 'Tis more orderly that subjects should obey their Governours, than Governours their Subjects; that Passion should obey Reason, than Reason obey Passion. When good Governours are to conform to Subjects, and reason vail to passion, 'tis monstrous; the one disturbs the order of a community, and the other defaceth the beauty of the Soul. Is it a comely thing for God to stoop to our meanness, or for us to stoop to his greatness?

2. In regard of the Divine Sovereignty, *'tis both honourable and advantageous to obey God.* 'Tis indeed the glory of a Superior, to be obey'd by his Inferior; but where the sovereign is of transcendent excellency and dignity, 'tis an honour to a mean person, to be under his immediate commands, and enrolled in his service. 'Tis more honour to be Gods Subject, than to be the greatest worldly Monarch; his *very service is an Empire*, and disobedience to him is a slavery. \* 'Tis a part of his sovereignty to reward any service done him. Other Lords may be willing to recompence the service of their Subjects, but are often rendred unable; but nothing can stand in the way of God, to hinder your reward, if nothing stand in your way to hinder your obedience. *Levit. 18. 5. If you keep my Statutes, you shall live in them, I am the Lord.* Is there any thing in the World can recompence you for Rebellion against God, and obedience to a Lust? *Saul* cools the hearts of his Servants, from running after *David*, by *David's* inability to give them Fields and Vineyards. *1 Sam. 22. 7. Will the Son of Jesse give every one of you Fields, and Vineyards, and make you Captains of thousands, and Captains of hundreds, that you have conspired against me?* But God hath a Dominion to requite, as well as an Authority to command your obedience. He is a great sovereign, to bear you out in your observance of his precepts against all reproaches and violences of men, and at last to crown you with eternal honour. If he should neglect vindicating one time or other your loyalty to him, he will neglect the maintaining and vindicating his own sovereignty and greatness.

3. God in all his dispensations to man was careful, to preserve the rights of his sovereignty, in exacting obedience of his Creature. The second thing he manifested his sovereignty in, was that of a Law-giver to *Adam*, after that of a Proprietor in giving him the possession of the Garden; one follow'd immediately the other. *Gen. 2. 15, 16. The Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it, and the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every Tree of the Garden*

\* *Servire deo  
vignare est.*



den thou mayest freely eat, but of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, &c. Nothing was to be enjoyed by man but upon the condition of obedience to his Lord; and it is observ'd that in the description of the Creation, God is not call'd *Lord* till the finishing of the Creation, and particularly in the forming of man. *Gen. 2. 7. And the Lord God form'd man.* Though he was Lord of all Creatures, yet it was in man he would have his sovereignty particularly manifested, and by man have his Authority specially acknowledged. The Law is prefac'd with this Title, *I am the Lord thy God. Exod. 20. 2.* Authority in *Lord*, sweetness in *God*, the one to enjoyn, the other to allure obedience; and God enforceth several of the commands with the same Title. And as he begins many precepts with it, so he concludes them with the same Title, *I am the Lord, Levit. 19. 37.* and in other places.

In all his communications of his Goodness to man in ways of blessing them, he stands upon the preservation of the rights of his sovereignty, and manifests his graciousness in favour of his Authority. *I am the Lord your God, your God* in all my perfections for your advantage, but yet your sovereign for your obedience. In all his condescensions he will have the rights of this untoucht and unviolated by us. When Christ would give the most pregnant instance of his condescending, and humble kindness, he urgeth his Authority, to ballast their Spirits from any presumptuous eruptions because of his humility. *John 13. 13. You call me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.* He asserts his Authority, and presseth them to their duty, when he had seem'd to lay it by for the demeanour of a Servant, and had below the dignity of a Master put on the humility of a mean underling, to wash the *Disciples* feet; all which was to oblige them to perform the command he then gave them. *ver. 14.* in Obedience to his Authority, and imitation of his *Example*.

4. *All Creatures obey him.* All Creatures punctually observe the Law he hath imprinted on their nature, and in their several capacities acknowledge him their sovereign, they move according to the inclinations he imprinted on them. The Sea contains it self in its bounds, and the Sun steps not out of its sphere, the Stars march in their Order, *they continue this day according to thy Ordinance, for all are thy Servants. Psal. 119. 91.* If he Orders things contrary to their primitive nature, they obey him. When he speaks the word, the devouring fire becomes gentle, and toucheth not a hair of the Children, he will preserve. The hunger-starv'd Lions suspend their ravenous nature, when so good a morsel as *Daniel* is set before them. And the Sun which had been in perpetual motion since its Creation, obeys the writ of ease God sent it in *Joshua's* time, and stands still. Shall insensible and sensible Creatures be punctual to his Orders, passively acknowledge his Authority? Shall Lions and Serpents obey God in their places, and shall not man, who can by reason argue out the sovereignty of God, and understand the sense and goodness of his Laws, and actively obey God with that will he hath enricht him with above other Creatures? Yet the truth is, every sensitive, yea every senseless Creature obeys God more than his rational, more than his gracious Creatures in this World. The rational Creatures since the fall have a prevailing principle of corruption. Let the Obedience of other Creatures incite us more to imitate them, and shame our remissness in not acknowledging the dominion of God, in the just way he prescribes us to walk in.

Well then, let us not pretend to own God as our Lord, and yet act the part of Rebels. Let us give him the reverence, and pay him that obedience, which of right belongs to so great a King. Whatsoever he speaks as a true God, ought to be believ'd, whatsoever he orders as a Sovereign God, ought to be obey'd. Let not God have less than man, nor man have more than God. 'Tis a common principle writ upon the reason of all men, that respect and observance is due to the Majesty of a man, much more to the Majesty of God as a Law-giver.

2. As this Doctrine presents us motives, so it directs us to the manner and kind of our Obedience to God.

1. It



1. *It must be with a respect to his Authority.* As the veracity of God is the formal object of faith, and the reason why we believe the things he hath reveal'd; so the Authority of God is the formal object of our obedience, or the reason why we observe the things he hath commanded. There must be a respect to his will as the rule, as well as to his Glory as the end. 'Tis not formally obedience that is not done with a regard to the order of God, though it may be materially obedience, as it answers the matter of the Precept. As when men will abstain from excess and rioting, because it is ruinous to their health, not because it is forbidden by the great Law-giver; This is to pay a respect to our own convenience and interest, not a Conscientious observance to God; a regard to our health, not to our Sovereign, a kindness to our selves, not a justice due to the rights of God. There must not only be a consideration of the matter of the Precept as convenient, but a consideration of the Authority of the Law-giver as Obligatory. *Thus saith the Lord*, Ushers in every order of his, directing our eye to the Authority enacting it. *Jeroboam* did God's will of prophesie in taking the Kingdom of *Israel*; And the devils may be subservient in God's will or providence; but neither of them are put upon the account of obedience, because not done intentionally with any Conscience of the Sovereignty of God. God will have this owned by a regular respect to it; So much he insists upon the honour of it, that the Sacrifice of Christ, God-man was most agreeable to him, not only as it was great and admirable in it self, but also for that ravishing obedience to his will, which was the Life and Glory of his Sacrifice, whereby the justice of God was not only owned in the Offering, but the Sovereignty of God owned in the Obedience. *Phil. 2. 8. He became obedient unto death; Wherefore God highly exalted him.*

2. *It must be the best and most exact obedience.* The most Sovereign Authority calls for the exactest and lowest observance, the highest Lord for the deepest homage: being he is a *great King*, he must have the *best in our flock*. *Mal. 1.* Obedience is due to God, as King, and the choicest obedience is due to him, as he is the most excellent King. The more majestick and noble any man is, the more careful we are in our manner of service to him. We are bound to obey God, not only under the title of a Lord in regard of jurisdiction and political subjection, but under the title of a true Lord and Master in regard of propriety: since we are not only his subjects but servants, the exactest obedience is due to God *Jure servitutis*, *Luk. 17. 10. when you have done all, say you are unprofitable servants*, because we can do nothing which we owe not to God.

3. *Sincere and inward Obedience.* As it is a part of his Sovereignty to prescribe Laws not only to man in his outward State, but to his Conscience, so it is a part of our subjection to receive his Laws into our will and heart. The Authority of his Laws exceeds Humane Laws in the extent and riches of them, and our acknowledgment of his Sovereignty cannot be right, but by subjecting the faculties of our soul to the Law-giver of our souls; We else acknowledge his Authority to be as limited, as the Empire of man. When his will not only sways the outward action, but the inward motion, 'tis a giving him the honour of his high Throne above the Throne of mortals. The right of God ought to be preserved undamaged in affection, as well as action.

4. *It must be sole Obedience.* We are order'd to serve him only, *Matt. 4. 10. Him only shalt thou serve*; as the only supream Lord, as being the highest Sovereign, it is fit he should have the highest obedience before all Earthly Sovereigns, and as being unparalleld by any among all the Nations, so none must have an obedience equal to him. When God commands, if the highest power on earth countermands it, the Precept of God must be preferred before the countermand of the creature. *Act. 4. 18, 19. Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* We must never give place to the Authority of all the Monarchs in the World, to the prejudice of that obedience we owe to the Supream Monarch of Heaven and Earth: this would be, to place the Throne



Throne of God at the foot-stool of man, and debase him below the rank of a creature. Loyalty to man can never recompence for the mischief accruing from disloyalty to God. All the obedience we are to give to man, is to be paid in obedience to God, and with an eye to his Precept: therefore what servants do for their Masters, they must do *as to the Lord*, Col. 3. 23. and children are to obey their Parents *in the Lord*, Eph. 6. 1. The Authority of God is to be eyed in all the services payable to man; Proper and true obedience hath God solely for its principal and primary object; all obedience to man that interferes with that, and would jumble out obedience to God, is to be refus'd. What obedience is due to man, is but render'd as a part of obedience to God, and a stooping of his Authority.

5. It must be *Universal Obedience*. The Laws of man are not to be *Universal*ly obey'd: some may be oppressing and unjust; No man hath Authority to make an unjust Law, and no subject is bound to obey an unrighteous Law; but God being a Righteous Sovereign, there is not one of his Laws but doth necessarily oblige us to Obedience. Whatsoever this supream power declares to be his will, it must be our care to observe; Man being his creature, is bound to be subject to whatsoever Laws he doth impose, to the meanest as well as to the greatest: they having equally a stamp of Divine Authority upon them. We are not to pick and choose among his Precepts: this is to pare away part of his Authority, and render him a half-sovereign.

It must be *Universal* in all places. An *English-man* in *Spain* is bound to obey the Laws of that Country, wherein he resides: and so not responsible there for the breach of the Laws of his native Country. In the same condition is a *Spaniard* in *England*. But the Laws of God are to be obeyed in every part of the World; wheresoever divine providence doth cast us, it casts us not out of the places where he commands, nor out of the compass of his own Empire. He is Lord of the World, and his Laws oblige in every part of the World, they were order'd for a World, and not for a particular Climate and Territory.

6. It must be *indisputable Obedience*. All Authority requires readiness in the Subject; the *Centurion* had it from his *Souldiers*, they *went* when he order'd them, and *came* when he beckned to them. *Matt.* 8. 9. 'Tis more fit God should have the same promptness from his Subjects. We are to obey his Orders, though our purblind understanding may not apprehend the reason of every one of them: 'Tis without dispute that he is Sovereign, and therefore 'tis without dispute, that we are bound to obey him, without controuling his conduct. A Master will not bear it from his slave, why should God from his creature? Though God admits his creatures sometimes to treat with him about the equality of his Justice, and also about the reason of some commands, yet sometimes he gives no other reason, but his own Sovereignty, *Thus saith the Lord*, to correct the malapertness of men, and exact from them an intire obedience to his unlimited and absolute Authority. When *Abraham* was commanded to offer *Isaac*, God acquaints him not with the reason of his demand till after, *Gen.* 22. 2, 12. nor did *Abraham* enter any demurr to the order, or expostulate with God, either from his own natural affection to *Isaac*, the hardness of the command, it being as it were a ripping up his own Bowels, nor the quickness of it after he had been a child of the promise, and a divine donation above the course of nature. Nor did *Paul* conferr with flesh and blood, and study arguments from nature and interest, to oppose the divine command, when he was sent upon his *Apostolical* employment. *Galatians* 1. 16. The more indisputable his right is to command, the stronger is our Obligation to obey, without questioning the reason of his Orders.

7. It



7. It must be *joyful Obedience*. Men are commonly more cheerful in their obedience to a great Prince, than to a mean Peasant : because the quality of the Master renders the service more honourable. 'Tis a discredit to a Prince's Government, when his Subjects obey him with discontent and dejectedness, as though he were a hard Master, and his Laws tyrannical and unrighteous. When we pay obedience but with a dull and feeble pace, and a sour and sad temper, we blemish our great Sovereign, imply his commands to be grievous, void of that peace and pleasure he proclaims to be in them ; That he deserves no respect from us, if we obey him, because we must, and not because we will. Involuntary Obedience deserves not the Title : 'tis rather submission than obedience, an act of the body, not of the mind ; a Mite of Obedience with cheerfulness, is better than a Talent without it. In the little *Paul* did, he comforts himself in this, that with the *mind* he serv'd the Law of God ; *Rom. 7. 25. The Testimonies of God were David's delight. Psal. 119. 24.* Our Understandings must take pleasure in knowing him, our wills delightfully embrace him, and our actions be cheerfully squar'd to him. This credits the Sovereignty of God in the World, makes others believe him to be a gracious Lord, and move them to have some veneration for his Authority.

8. It must be *perpetual Obedience*. As man is a subject as soon as he is a creature, so he is a Subject as long as he is a Creature. God's Sovereignty is of perpetual duration, as long as he is God ; Man's obedience must be perpetual, while he is a man. God cannot part with his Sovereignty, and a creature cannot be exempted from subjection ; We must not only *serve* him, but *cleave to him*. *Deut. 13. 4.* Obedience is continued in Heaven, his Throne is established in Heaven, it must be bow'd to in Heaven, as well as in Earth. The Angels continually fulfil his pleasure.

7. Exhortation ; *Patience is a duty flowing from this Doctrine*. In all strokes upon our selves, or thick showers upon the Church ; *The Lord reigns*, is a consideration to prevent muttering against him, and make us quietly wait to see what the issue of his divine pleasure will be. 'Tis too great an insolence against the Divine Majesty, to censure what he acts, or quarrel with him for what he inflicts. Proud clay doth very unbecomingly swell against an infinite superior. If God be our Sovereign, we ought to subscribe to his afflicting will without debates, as well as to his liberal will with affectionate applauses. We should be as full of patience under his sharper, as of praise under his more grateful dispensations, and be without reluctance against his penal, as well as his preceptive pleasure. 'Tis God's part to inflict, and the creatures part to submit.

This Doctrine affords us *motives*, and shews us the *nature of Patience*.

1. *Motives to it.*

1. *God being Sovereign, hath an absolute right to dispose of all things*. His Title to our persons and possessions is upon this account stronger than our own can be ; We have as much reason to be angry with our selves, when we assert our worldly right against others, as to be angry with God for asserting the right of his Dominion over us. Why should we enter a charge against him, because he hath not temper'd us so strong in our bodies, drawn us with as fair colours, embellish'd our spirits with as rich gifts as others ? Is he not the Sovereign of his own goods, to impart what, and in what measure he pleaseth ? Would you be content your servants should check your pleasure, in dispensing your own favors ? 'Tis an unreasonable thing, not to leave God to the exercise of his own dominion. Though *Job* were a pattern of patience, yet he had deep tinctures of impatience, he often complains of God's usage of him, as too hard, and stands much upon his own integrity ; But when God comes in the latter *Chapters* of that book, to justify his carriage towards him, he chargeth him not as a criminal, but considers



considers him only as his Vassal. He might have found flaws enough in *Job's* carriage, and corruption enough in *Job's* nature, to clear the equity of his proceeding as a Judge, but he useth no other *medium* to convince him, but the greatness of his Majesty, the unlimitedness of his sovereignty, which so appales the good man, that he puts his finger on his mouth, and stands mute with a *self-adorer*; before him as a sovereign, rather than as a Judge. When he doth pinch us, and deprive us of what we most affect, his right to do it should silence our lips, and calm our hearts from any boisterous uproars against him.

2. *The property of all still remains in God, since he is sovereign.* He did not desert himself of the property, when he granted us the use. The Earth is his, not ours, the fulness of the Earth is his, 'tis not ours, the fulness any of us have, as well as the fulness others have. After he had given the *Israelites* Corn, Wine, and Oyl, he calls them all *His*, and emphatically adds *My* to every one of them. *Hos.* 2. 9. His right is universal over every mite we have, and perpetual too. He may therefore take from us, what he please. He did but deposite in our hands for a while the benefits we enjoy, either Children, Friends, Estate or Lives; he did not make a total conveyance of them, and alienate his own property, when he put them into our hands; we can shew no Patent for them, wherein the full right is past over to us, to hold them against his will and pleasure, and implead him if he offer to reassume them. He reserved a power to dispossess us upon a forfeiture, as he is the Lord and Governour. Did any of us yet answer the condition of his grant? It was his indulgence, to allow them so long. There is reason to submit to him, when he reassumes what he lent us, and rather to thank him, that he lent it so long, and did not seize upon it sooner.

3. *Other things have more reason to complain of our sovereignty over them, than we of God's exercise of his sovereignty over us.* Do we not exercise an Authority over our Beasts, as to strike them, when we please, and meerly for our pleasure; and think we merit no reproof for it, because they are our own, and of a nature inferior to ours? And shall not God who is absolute, do as much with us, who are more below him, than the meanest Creatures are below us? They are Creatures as well as we, and we no more Creatures than they, they were fram'd by omnipotence, as well as we; there is no more difference between them and us in the notion of Creatures.

As there is no difference between the greatest Monarch on Earth, and the meanest Beggar on the dunghil in the notion of a man: The Beggar is a man, as well as the Monarch, and as much a man; the difference consists in the special Endowments we have above them by the bounty of their and our common Creator. We are less, if compared with God, than the worst, meanest, most sordid Creature can be, if compared with us. Hath not a Bird or a Hare, (if they had a capacity) more reason to complain of mens persecuting them by their Hawks and their Dogs? but would their complaints appear reasonable, since both were made for the use of man, and man doth but use the nature of the one, to attain a benefit by the other? Have we any reason to complain of God, if he lets loose other Creatures, the devouring Hounds of the World, to bite and afflict us? We must not open our lips against him, nor let our heart swell against his scourge, since both they and we were made for his use, as well as other Creatures for ours. This is a reason to stifle all complaints against God, but not to make us careless of preventing afflictions, or emerging out of them by all just ways. The Hare hath a nature to shift for it self by its winding and turning, and the Bird by its flight, and neither of them could be blam'd, if they were able, should the one scratch out the Eyes of the Hounds, and the other sacrifice the Hawk to its own fury.

4. *'Tis a folly not to submit to him.* Why should we strive against him, since he is an unaccountable sovereign, and gives no account of any of his matters. *Job* 33. 13. Who can disannul the judgement God gives? There is no appeal from the su-



pream Court; a higher Court can repeal, or null the sentence of an inferior Court, but the sentence of the highest stands *irreversible*, but by it self, and its own Authority. 'Tis better to lower our Sails, than to grapple with one, that can shoot us under Water. To submit to that sovereign, whom we cannot subdue.

2. *It shew's us the true nature of 'Patience in regard of God.* 'Tis a submission to Gods sovereignty. As the formal object of Obedience is the Authority of God enacting the Law, so the formal object of patience is the Authority of God inflicting the punishment. As his right of commanding is to be eyed in the one, so his right of punishing is to be considered in the other. This was *Eli's* condition when he had receiv'd a message, that might put flesh and blood into a mutiny, the rending the *Priesthood* from his Family, and the ruine of his House, yet this consideration, *'Tis the Lord*, calms him into submission, and a willing compliance with the Divine pleasure, *1 Sam. 3. 18. 'Tis the Lord, Let him do what seems good in his sight.* *Job* was of the same strain. *Job. 1. 21. The Lord gives, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.* He considers God as a sovereign, who was not to be reproached, or have any thing uncomly uttered of him, for what he had done. To be patient, because we cannot avoid it, or resist it, is a violent not a *Loyal Patience*, but to submit because it is the will of God to inflict: To be silent, because the sovereignty of God doth order it, is a patience of a true complexion. The other kind of patience is no other than that of an Enemy, that will free himself as soon as he can, and by any way though never so violent that offers it self. This sort of patience is that of a subject acknowledging the supream Authority over him, and that he ought to be ordered by the will, and to the Glory of God, more than by his own will, and for his own ease. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth. Psal. 39. 10.* Not because I could not help it: But *because thou didst it*, thou who art my sovereign Lord. The greatness of God claimes an awful and inviolable respect from his Creatures, in what way soever he doth dispose of them; this is due to him, since his Kingdom ruleth over all, his Kingdom should be acknowledged by all, and his Royal Authority submitted to in all that he doth.



A  
DISCOURSE  
UPON  
GOD'S Patience.

NAHUM. I. Verse 3.

*The Lord is slow to Anger, and great in Power, and will not at all acquit the Wicked: The Lord bath his way in the Whirl-wind, and in the Storm, and the Clouds are the dust of his Feet.*

**T**HE Subject of this prophesie is Gods sentence against *Niniveh*, the Head and Metropolis of the *Affyrian* Empire. A City famous for its strength, and thickness of its Walls, and the multitude of its Towers for defence against an Enemy. The Forces of this Empire did God use as a scourge against the *Israelites*, and by their hands ruin'd *Samaria* the chief City of the Ten Tribes, and transplanted them as Captives into another Country, 2 *Kin.* 17. 5, 6. about six years after *Hezekiah* came to the Crown of *Judah.* 2 *Kings* 18. compared with the 17 chap. v. 6. In whose time, or (as some think) later, *Nahum* utter'd this prophesie. The Name *Nahum*, signifies Comforter, though the matter of his prophesie be dreadful to *Niniveh*, it was comfortable to the people of God: For a promise is made ver. 7. *The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them, that trust in him.* And an encouragement to *Judah*, to keep their solemn Feasts, ver. 15: And also in chap. 2. 3. with a declaration of the misery of *Niniveh* and the destruction of it.

Observe.

I. *In all the fears of Gods people, God will have a Comforter for them.* *Judah* might well be dejected with the calamity of their Brethren, not knowing but it might be their own turn shortly after. They knew not where the ambition of the *Affyrians* would stop, but God by his Prophets calms their fears of their furious Neighbour, by predicting to them the ruine of their fear'd Adversary.

II. *The destruction of the Churches Enemies is the comfort of the Church.* By that God is glorified in his Justice, and the Church secur'd in its Worship.

III. *The Victories of Persecutors, secure them not from being the triumphs of others.* The *Affyrians* that conquered, and captiv'd *Israel*, were themselves to be conquered, and captiv'd by the *Medes.* The whole oppressing Empire is threatened with destruction in the ruine of their chief City; accordingly it was accom-



plisht, and the Empire extinguisht by a greater power. God burns the Rod, when it hath done the work he appointed it for; and the wisp of straw wherewith the vessels are scour'd is flung into the fire, or upon the Dunghil.

*Nabum* begins his prophesie majestically, with a description of the wrath and fury of God. *ver. 2. God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth, the Lord revengeth, and is furious, the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and reserveth wrath for his Enemies:* And therefore the whole of it is called *ver. 1. The burden of Nineveh*, as those prophesies are, which are composed of threatenings of judgments, which lie as a mighty weight upon the heads, and backs of sinners.

*God is Jealous.*] jealous of his Glory and Worship, and jealous for his people and their security. He cannot long bear the oppressions of his people, and the boasts of his Enemies. He is jealous for himself, and is jealous for you of Judah, who retain his Worship. He is not forgetful of those that remember him, nor of the danger of those that are desirous to maintain his honour in the World. In this first expression, the Prophet uses the Covenant Name, *God*, the Covenant runs, *I am your God*, or *The Lord your God*, mostly *God* without *Lord*, never *Lord* without *God*: And therefore his jealousy here is meant of the care of his people, and the relation that his actions against his Enemies have to his Servants. He is a lover of his own; and a revenger on his Enemies.

*The Lord Revengeth and is Furious.*] He now describes God by a name of sovereignty and Power, when he describes him in his Wrath, and Fury, and is Furious. *Heb. קַדַּשׁ חַמָּה Lord of hot Anger.* God will vindicate his own Glory, and have his right on his Enemies in a way of punishment, if they will not give it him in a way of Obedience. \* 'Tis three times repeated, to shew the certainty of the judgment. And the name of *Lord* added to every one, to intimate the Power wherewith the Judgment should be executed. 'Tis not a Fatherly correction of Children in a way of Mercy; but an offended sovereigns destruction of his Enemies in a way of vengeance. There is an anger of God with his own people, which hath more of Mercy than Wrath; in this his Rod is guided by his bowels. There is a fury of God against his Enemies, where there is sole Wrath without any tincture of Mercy; when his Sword is all edge without any Balsom-drops upon it. Such a fury as *David* deprecates. *Psal. 6. 1. Oh Lord rebuke me not in thy Anger, nor chasten me in thy sore displeasure;* with a fury untempered with Grace, and insupportable Wrath.

*He reserves Wrath for his Enemies.*] He lays it up in his Treasury, to be brought out, and expended in a due season. *Wrath* is supplied by our Translators, and is not in the *Hebrew*. He reserves, what? that which is too sharp to be exprest, too great to be conceiv'd. A vengeance it is. And *רָגַזָּה הוּא* He reserves it. He that hath an infinite Wrath, he reserves it, that hath a strength, and power to execute it.

#### VERSE 3.

*The Lord is slow to Anger.*] *Heb. אֶרֶב אַנְּפוֹתָיו Of broad Nostrils.* The Anger of God is exprest by this word, which signifies *Nostrils*. As *Job 9. 13. If God will not withdraw his Anger,* *Heb. his nostril.* And the Anger whereby the wicked are consum'd, is called the breath of *Nostrils*, *Job 4. 9.* and when he is angry, smoak and fire are said to go out of his *Nostrils*. *2 Sam. 2. 9.* and in the 74th. *Psal. 1. Why doth thy anger smoak,* *Heb. Why do thy Nostrils smoak.* So the rage of a Horse when he is provokt in battle, is call'd the Glory of his *Nostrils*. *Job 39. 20. He breaths quick fumes, and neighs with fury.*

And slowness to anger is here exprest by the phrase of *long or wide Nostrils*: Because in a vehement anger the blood boyling about the heart, exhales mens Spirits, which fume up, and break out in dilated *Nostrils*. But where the passages



sages are straiter, the spirits have not so quick a vent; and therefore raise more motions within. Or because, the wider the Nostrils are the more cool Air is drawn in, to temper the heat of the heart; where the angry spirits are gather'd. And so the passion is allay'd, and sooner calm'd. God speaks of himself in Scripture often after the rate of Men, *Jeremy* prays. *Jer. 15. 15.* That God would not take him away in his *long-suffering*, Heb. *in the length of his Nostrils*. i. e. Be not slow and backward in thy anger against my Persecutors, as to give them time, and opportunity to destroy me. The Nostrils as well as other members of a humane Body are ascribed to God. He is slow to anger, he hath anger in his nature, but is not always in the execution of it.

*And great in Power.*] This may referre to his *Patience* as the cause of it, or as a barr to the abuse of it.

1. He is *slow to anger*, and *great in power*, i. e. his power moderates his Anger; he is not so impotent, as to be at the command of his passions, as men are. He can restrain his anger under just provocations to exercise it. His power over himself is the cause of his slowness to wrath. As *Numb. 14. 17.* *Let the power of my Lord be great*, saith *Moses*, when he pleads for the *Israelites* pardon. Men that are great in the World, are quick in passions, and are not so ready to forgive an injury, or bear with an offender, as one of a meaner rank. 'Tis a want of a power over a mans self, that makes him do unbecoming things upon a provocation. A Prince that can bridle his passion, is a King over himself, as well as over his Subjects. *God is slow to Anger*, because *great in Power*. He hath no less power over himself, than over his Creatures. He can sustain great injuries without an immediate and quick revenge. He hath a power of *Patience*, as well as a power of *Justice*.

2. Or thus, he is *slow to Anger*, and *great in Power*. He is slow to Anger, but not for want of Power to revenge himself; his Power is as great to punish, as his *Patience* to spare. It seemsthus, that slowness to Anger is brought in as an objection against the revenge proclaimed. What do you tell us of vengeance, vengeance, nothing but such repetitions of vengeance? As though we were ignorant, that God is slow to Anger? 'Tis true, saith the Prophet, I acknowledge it as much as you, that *God is slow to Anger*; but withall *great in Power*. His Anger certainly succeeds his abus'd *Patience*; he will not always bridle in his Wrath, but one time or other let it march out in fury against his Adversaries. The *Assyrians* who had captiv'd the Ten Tribes, and been victorious a little against the Jews, might think that the God of *Israel* had been conquered by their Gods, as well as the People professing him had been subdued by their arms. That God had lost all his power, and the Jews might argue from Gods *Patience* to his Enemies, against the credit of the Prophets denouncing revenge. The Prophet answers to the terror of the one, and the comfort of the other. That this indulgence to his Enemies, and not accounting with them for their Crimes, proceeded from the greatness of his *Patience*, and not from any debility in his power. As it refers to the *Assyrian*, it may be rendered thus: You *Ninivites* upon your Repentance after *Jonah's* thundring of Judgments are Witnesses of the slowness of God to Anger, and had your punishments deferr'd. But falling to your old sins, you shall find a real punishment, and that he hath as much *Power*, to execute his ancient threatnings, as he had then compassion to recall them. His *Patience* to you then was not for want of power to ruine you, but was the effect of his goodness towards you. As it refers to the *Jews*, it may be thus paraphrased: do not despise this threatening against your Enemies, because of the greatness of their might, the seeming stability of their Empire, and the terror they possess all the Nations with round about them. It may be long before it comes, but assure yourselves, the threatening I denounce, shall certainly be executed, though he hath *Patience* to endure them a hundred thirty five years, (for so long it was before *Nineveh* was destroy'd after this threatening, as \* *Ribera in loc.* \* p. 357. col. 11 computes from the years of the reign of the Kings of *Judah*) yet he hath also



also power to verifie his word, and accomplish his will : assure your selves, he will not at all acquit the wicked.

*He will not acquit the wicked.*] He will not always account the criminal an innocent, as he seems to do by a present sparing of them, and dealing with them as if they were destitute of any provoking carriage towards him, and he void of any resentment of it. He will *not acquit the wicked*, how is this, who then can be saved? Is there no place for remission? *He will not acquit the wicked i. e.* He will not acquit obstinate sinners. As he hath *Patience* for the wicked, so he hath *Mercy* for the penitent. The wicked are the subjects of his long suffering, but not of his acquitting grace. He doth not presently punish their sins, because he is slow to anger; But without their Repentance he will not blot out their sins, because he is righteous in judgment. If God should acquit them without Repentance for their crimes, he must himself repent of his own Law, and Righteous Sanction of it.

*He will not acquit, i. e.* he will not go back from the thing he hath spoken, and forbear, at long run, the punishment he hath threatned.

*The Lord hath his way in the Whirl-wind,*] The way of God signifies sometimes the Law of God, sometimes the providential operations of God. *Ezek. 18. 25. Is not my way equal?* It seems there to take in both.

\* *Tirinus in loc.* *And in the Storm, and the Clouds are the dust of his feet.*] \* The Prophet describes here the fight of God with the *Assyrians*, as if he rush't upon them with a mighty noise of an Army, raising the dust with the feet of their horses, and motion of their Chariots. Symbolically, it signifies the multitude of the *Chaldean*, and *Median* forces invading, besieging and storming the City.

It signifies,

1. *The rule of Providence.* The way of God is in every motion of the creature; He rules all things, Whirl-wind, Storms, Clouds, his way is in all their walks, in the whirlings and blustrings of the one, in the raising and dissolving the other. He blows up the Winds, and compacts the Clouds, to make them serviceable to his designs.

2. *The management of wars by God.* *His way is in the storm;* As he was the Captain of the *Assyrians* against *Samaria*, so he will be the Captain of the *Medes* against *Niniveh*. As *Israel* was not so much wasted by the *Assyrians*, as by the Lord, who levied, and arm'd their Forces; So *Niniveh* shall be subverted, rather by God than by the Arms of the *Medes*. Their force is describ'd not to be so much from Humane power as Divine; God is President in all the commotions of the World, his way is in every Whirl-wind.

3. *The easiness of executing the judgment.* He is of so great power that he can excite Tempests in the Air, and overthrow them with the Clouds, which are the dust of his feet. He can blind his enemies, and avenge himself on them: he is Lord of Clouds, and can fill their womb with Hail, Lightnings, and Thunders, to burst out upon those he kindles his anger against. He is of so great force, that he needs not use the strength of his Arm, but the dust of his Feet, to effect his destroying purpose.

4. *The suddenness of the judgment.* Whirl-winds come suddenly without any harbingers to give notice of their approach; Clouds are swift in their motion. *Isa. 60. 8. Who are those that flie as a Cloud,* i. e. with a mighty nimbleness; What God doth, he shall do on the sudden, come upon them before they are aware, be too quick for them in his motion to over-run, and over-reach them. The winds are describ'd with wings, in regard of the quickness of their motion.

5. *The*



5. *The terror of judgments, The Lord hath his way in the Whirlwind, i. e.* in great displeasure. The anger of the Lord is often compar'd to a storm; He shall bring Clouds of judgments upon them, many and thick, as terrible as when a day is turn'd into night, by the mustering of the darkest clouds, that interpose between the Sun and the Earth. *Clouds and darkness are round about him, and a fire goes before him, when he burns up his enemies.* 'Psal. 97. 2, 3. The judgments shall have terror without mercy, as clouds obscure the light, and are dark marks before the face and glory of the Sun, and cut off its refreshing Beams from the Earth. Clouds note multitude and obscurity; God could crush them without a Whirlwind, beat them to powder with one touch, but he will bring his judgments in the most surprizing and amazing manner to flesh and blood, so that all their Glory shall be chang'd into nothing but terror, by the noise of the bellying winds, and the clouds like ink blacking the Heavens.

6. *The confusion of the Offenders upon God's proceeding.* A Whirlwind is not only a boisterous wind, that hurls and rous every thing out of its place, but by its circular motion, by its winding to all points of the compass, it confounds things, and jumbles them together. It keeps not one point, but by a circumgyration toucheth upon all. Clouds like dust shall be blown in their face, and gum up their eyes. They shall be in a posture of confusion, not know what counsels to take, what motions to resolve upon; Let them look to every point of Heaven and Earth, they shall meet with a Whirlwind to confound them, and cloudy dust to blind them.

7. *The irresistibleness of the judgment.* Winds have more than a Gyant like force, a torrent of compacted Air, that with an invincible wilfulness bears all before it, displaceth the firmest Trees, and levels the tallest Towers, and pulls up bodies from their natural place. Clouds also are over our heads, and above our reach; When God places them upon his people for defence, they are an invincible security. 'Isa. 4. 5. And when he moves them as his Chariot against a people, they end in an irresistible destruction; Thus the ruine of the wicked is describ'd. 'Prov. 10. 25. *As the Whirlwind passes, so is the wicked no more.* It blows them down, sweeps them away, they irrecoverably fall before the force of it. *What heart can endure, and what hands can be strong, in the days wherein God doth deal with them?* 'Ezek. 22. 14. Thus is the judgment against *Niniveh* describ'd; God hath his way in the Whirlwind to thunder down their strongest Walls, which were so thick, that Chariots could march a-breast upon them, and batter down their mighty Towers, which that City had in multitudes upon their Walls.

They are the first words I intend to insist upon, to treat of the Patience of God, describ'd in those words; *The Lord is slow to anger.*

Doct. *Slowness to anger, or admirable Patience, is the property of the divine nature.* As *Patience* signifies *suffering*, so it is not in God. The divine nature is impassible, incapable of any impair, it cannot be touched by the violences of men, nor the essential Glory of it be diminish'd by the injuries of men; But as it signifies a *willingness to defer*, and an *unwillingness to pour forth his wrath* upon sinful creatures; He moderates his provoked justice, and forbears to revenge the injuries he daily meets with in the World. He suffers no grief by mens wronging him, but he restrains his arm from punishing them according to their merits; And thus there is *Patience* in every cross a man meets with in the World: because though it be a punishment, 'tis less than is merited by the unrighteous rebel, and less than may be inflicted by a righteous and powerful God.

This *Patience* is seen in his providential works in the World; *He suffered the Nations to walk in their own way*, and the witness of his Providence to them was his giving them *Rain, and fruitful seasons, filling their heart with food and gladness.* 'Act. 16. 17. The Heathens took notice of it, and signified it, by feigning their God *Saturn*, to be bound a whole year in a soft cord, a cord of wool, and  
express



\* Rhodigi. l. 5.  
c. 14.

\* Διὰ τὸν δὲ ὅτι  
ἐν χειρὶ δ' αὐτοῦ  
τὸ πᾶν τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην  
καλῶν, καλῶν  
δὲ τὸ τίς τ' αὐτοῦ  
θῆκεν τὸ ἐν  
χειρὶ δ' αὐτοῦ  
προθυμίαν ὄνομα  
μαρτυρεῖται  
Theodore in  
loc

express it by this Proverb; *The Mills of the Gods grind slowly*; i. e. God doth not use men with that severity that they deserve: The Mills being usually turned by criminals, condemn'd to that work. \* This in Scripture is frequently express'd by a *slowness* to anger, *Psal.* 103. 8. sometimes by *long suffering*, which is a patience with duration: *Psal.* 145. 8. and *Joel* 2. 13. He is slow to anger, he takes not the first occasions of a provocation; He is long suffering, *Rom.* 9. 22. and *Psal.* 86. 15. he forbears punishment upon many occasions offer'd him. 'Tis long before he consents to give fire to his wrath, and shoot out his Thunderbolts; Sin hath a loud cry, but God seems to stop his ears, not to hear the clamor it raises, and the charge it presents. He keeps his Sword a long time in the sheath; One calls the *Patience* of God, the sheath of his sword, upon those words, *Ezek.* 21. 3. *I will draw forth my sword out of his sheath.* \* This is one remarkable letter in the name of God, he himself proclaims it; *Exod.* 34. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful, gracious and long suffering.* And Moses pleads it in the behalf of the people, *Numb.* 14. 18. where he placeth it in the first rank; The Lord is *long suffering*, and of *great mercy*: 'Tis the first spark of mercy, and ushers it to its exercises in the World. In the Lord's Proclamation, 'tis put in the middle link, *Mercy and Truth* together; Mercy could have no room to act, if *Patience* did not prepare the way; And his truth and goodness in his promise of the Redeemer would not have been manifest to the World, if he had shot his Arrows as soon as men committed their sins, and deserved his punishment. This perfection is express'd by other phrases, as keeping silence; *Psal.* 50. 21. *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence,* אלה עשיתי ואתה שתי it signifies to behave ones self as a deaf or dumb man. I did not fly in thy face, as some do with great a noise, upon a light provocation, as if their Life, Honour, Estates were at the stake. I did not presently call thee to the bar, and pronounce judicial sentence upon thee according to the Law, but demean'd my self, as if I had been ignorant of thy crimes, and had not been invested with the power of judging thee for them, *Chald.* *I waited for thy Conversion.* God's *Patience* is the silence of his Justice, and the first whisper of his mercy.

'Tis also express'd by *not laying folly* to men. *Job* 24. 12. Men groan under the oppressions of others, yet God *lays not folly* to them, i. e. to the oppressors, God suffers them to go on with impunity. He doth not deliver his people, because he would try them, and takes not revenge upon the unrighteous, because in *Patience* he doth bear with them. *Patience* is the Life of his Providence in this World. He chargeth not men with their crimes here, but reserves them upon impenitency for another trial. This *attribute* is so great a one, that it is signally called by the name of perfection. *Matt.* 5. 45, 48. He had been speaking of Divine goodness, and *Patience* to evil men, and he concludes, *be you perfect*, &c. Implying it to be an amazing perfection in the divine nature, and worthy of imitation.

In the prosecution of this,

1. Let us consider the *nature* of this *Patience*.
2. *Wherein 'tis manifested.*
3. *Why God doth exercise so much 'Patience.*
4. *The Use.*

1. *The nature of this 'Patience.*

1. 'Tis part of the *divine goodness and mercy*, yet differs from both. God being the greatest goodness, hath the greatest mildness; Mildness is always the companion of true goodness, and the greater the goodness, the greater the mildness. Who so Holy as Christ, and who so meek? God's slowness to anger is a branch, or slip from his mercy. *Psal.* 145. 8. *The Lord is full of compassion, slow to anger.* It differs from mercy in the formal consideration of the object; *Mercy* respects the creature as miserable, *Patience* respects the creature as criminal: *Mercy* pities him in his misery, and *Patience* bears with the sin, which engender'd that misery, and is giving birth to more.

Again,



Again, *Mercy* is one end of *Patience*, his long suffering is partly to glorifie his Grace, so it was in *Paul*. 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. As slowness to anger springs from goodness, so it makes mercy the butt, and mark of its operations; *Isa.* 30. 18. *He waits that he may be gracious*; Goodness sets God upon the exercise of *Patience*, and *Patience* sets many a sinner on running into the armes of mercy. That mercy which makes God ready to embrace returning sinners, makes him willing to bear with them in their sins, and wait their return.

It differs also from goodness, in regard of the *object*. The object of goodness is every creature, Angels, Men, all inferiour creatures, to the lowest worm that crawls upon the ground. The *object of Patience* is primarily man, and secondarily, those creatures that respect mens support, conveniency and delight; But they are not the *objects of Patience*, as consider'd in themselves, but in relation to man, for whose use they were created, and therefore *God's Patience* to them is properly his Patience with man. The lower creatures do not injure God, and therefore are not the *objects of his Patience*, but as they are forfeited by man, and man deserves to be depriv'd of them; As man in this regard falls under the *Patience* of God, so do those creatures which are design'd for mans good. That *Patience* which spares man, spares other creatures for him, which were all forfeited by man's sin, as well as his own life, and are rather the testimonies of God's *Patience*, than the proper objects of it. The object of God's goodness then is the whole Creation, not a Devil in Hell, but as a creature is a mark of his goodness, but not of his patience. There is a kind of sparing exercis'd to the Devils, in deferring their compleat punishment, and hitherto keeping off the day, wherein their final sentence is to be pronounced, yet the Scripture never mentions this by the name of slowness to anger, or long suffering. It can no more be call'd *Patience*, than a Princes keeping a Malefactor in chains, and not pronouncing a condemning sentence, or not executing a sentence already pronounced, can be call'd a *Patience* with him, when it is not out of kindness to the Offender, but for some reasons of State. God's sparing the Devils from their total punishment (which they have not yet, but are *reserved in chains, under darkness for it.* *Jude* 6.) is not in order to Repentance, or attended with any invitations from God, or hopes in them: and therefore cannot come under the same title as Gods sparing man; Where there is no proposal of mercy, there is no exercise of *Patience*. The fall'n Angels had no mercy reserv'd for them, nor any Sacrifice prepar'd for them, God *spared not the Angels*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 4. *but delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment*, i. e. he had no *Patience* for them: For *Patience* is properly a temporary sparing a person, with a waiting for his relenting, and a change of his injurious demeanour; The object of goodness is more extensive than that of *Patience*: Nor do they both consider the object under the same relation. Goodness respects things in a capacity, or in a state of Creation, and brings them forth into Creation, and nureth, and supports them as Creatures. *Patience* considers them already Created, and fall'n short of the duty of creatures; It considers them as sinners, or in relation to sinners. Had not sin entred, *Patience* had never been exercised; but goodness had been exercised, had the creature stood firm in its Created State without any transgression; Nay Creation could not have been without goodness: because it was goodness to Create; But *Patience* had never been known without an object, which could not have been without an injury. Where there is no wrong, no suffering, nor like to be any, *Patience* hath no prospect of any operation. So then goodness respects persons as creatures, *Patience* as transgressors; Mercy eyes men as miserable and obnoxious to punishment: *Patience* considers men as sinful, and provoking to punishment.

2. Since 'tis a part of goodness and mercy, *'tis not an insensible patience*. What is the fruit of pure goodness, cannot be from a weakness of resentment; he is *slow to anger*; The Prophet doth not say, he is incapable of anger, or cannot discern what is a real object of anger; It implies, that he doth consider every provocation, but he is *not hasty* to discharge his arrows upon the Offenders; He sees all, while he bears with them: his omniscience excludes any ignorance; He cannot but see

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every wrong; every aggravation in that wrong, every step and motion from the beginning to the completing it: For he knows all our thoughts; he sees the sin, and the sinner at the same time, the sin with an eye of abhorrency, and the sinner with an eye of pity. His eye is upon their iniquities, and his hatred edged against them; while he stands with arms open, waiting a penitent return. When he publisheth his patience in his keeping silence, he publisheth also his resolution, to set sin in order before their Eyes. *Psal. 50. 21. I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thy Eyes.* Think me not such a peice of phlegm and so dull as not to resent your insolencies; you shall see in my final charge, when I come to Judge, that not a wry look escap't my knowledge, that I had an eye to behold, and a heart to loath every one of your Transgressions. The Church was ready to think, that Gods slowness to deliver her, and his bearing with her oppressors, was not from any *Patience* in his nature, but a drowsie carelesness, a senseless Lethargy. *Psal. 44. 23. Awake, why sleepest thou, Oh Lord?* We must conclude him an inapprehensive God, before we can conclude him an insensible God. As his delaying his promise, is *not slackness* to his people, *2 Pet. 3. 9.* So his deferring of punishment, is not from a stupidity, under the affronts offered him.

3. Since 'tis a part of his Mercy and Goodness, 'tis *not a constrained or faint-hearted Patience.* 'Tis not a slowness to Anger, arising from a dependency of his own power to revenge. He hath as much power to punish, as he hath to forbear punishment. He that created a World in six days, and that by a word, wants not a strength to crush all mankind in one minute; and with as much ease as a Word imports, can give satisfaction to his Justice in the blood of the offender. *Patience* in man is many times interpreted, and true too, a cowardise, a feebleness of Spirit and a want of strength. But it is not from the shortness of the divine arm, that he cannot reach us, nor from the weakness of his hand, that he cannot strike us. 'Tis not because he cannot level his bolts at us, as if we were in peices like a Potters Vessel, or consume us as a Moth. He is too strong and truest, to fall before him, and lay the strongest at his feet for their crime. He that did not want a powerful Word, to dissolve the whole frame of this world out of being. 'Tis not therefore out of a distrust of his own power, that he hath supported a sinful World for so many ages, and patiently born the Blasphemies of some, the neglects of others, and the ingratitude of all, without inflicting that severe Justice which righteously he might have done; he wants no thunder to crush the whole generation of men, nor waters to drown them, nor Earth to swallow them up. How easie is it for him to single out this or that particular person, to be the object of his *Wrath*, and not of his *Patience*? What he hath done to one, he may to another; any signal judgment he hath sent upon one, is an evidence, that he wants not power to inflict it upon all. Could he not make the motes in the Air to choke us at every breath, Rain thunderbolts instead of drops of water, fill the Clouds with a consuming Lightning, take off the reverence and fear of man, which he hath imprinted upon the Creature, Spirit our domestick Beasts to be our Executioners, unloose the Tiles from the house top to brain us, or make the fall of a house to crush us? 'Tis but taking out the pins, and giving a blast, and the work is done. And doth he want a power to do any of those things? 'Tis not then a faint-hearted, or feeble *Patience*, that he exerciseth towards Man.

4. Since 'tis not for want of power over the Creature, 'tis from a *fulness of power over himself.* This is in the Text; *The Lord is slow to Anger, and great in Power*; 'tis a part of his Dominion over himself, whereby he can moderate, and rule his own affections according to the holiness of his own Will. As it is the effect of his power, so it is an argument of his power; the greatness of the effect demonstrates the fulness, and sufficiency of the Cause. The more feeble any man is in reason the less command he hath over his passions, and he is the more heady



revenge. Revenge is a sign of a Childish mind; the stronger any man is in reason, the more command he hath over himself. *Prov. 16. 32. He that is slow to Anger is better than the mighty, and he that rules his own Spirit, than he that takes a City.* He that can restrain his Anger, is stronger than the *Cæsars*, and *Alexanders* of the World, that have fill'd the Earth with slain Carcasses, and ruin'd Cities. By the same reason, God's slowness to Anger is a greater argument of his Power, than the creating a World, or the power of dissolving it by a Word. In this he hath a Dominion over Creatures, in the other over himself. This is the reason he will not return to destroy; because *I am God, and not Man. Hosea 11. 9.* I am not so weak and impotent as man, that cannot restrain his Anger. This is a strength possessed only by a God, wherein a Creature is no more able to parallel him, than in any other. So that he may be said to be the Lord of himself; as it is in the verse before the Text, that he is *the Lord of Anger*, in the *Hebrew* instead of *furious* as we translate it, so he is the Lord of Patience. The end why God is *Patient*, is to shew his Power. *Rom. 9. 22. What if God willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much Long-suffering, the Vessels of Wrath fitted to destruction?* To shew his Wrath upon Sinners, and his Power over himself, in bearing such indignities, and forbearing punishment so long, when men were vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, of whom there was no hopes of amendment. Had he immediately broken in pieces those Vessels, his power had not so eminently appear'd, as it hath done, in tolerating them so long, that had provoked him to take them off so often. There is indeed the power of his Anger, and there is the power of his *Patience*; and his power is more seen in his *Patience*, than in his Wrath. 'Tis no wonder that he that is above all, is able to crush all. But it is a wonder, that he that is provok't by all, doth not upon the first provocation, rid his hands of all. This is the reason, why he did bear such a weight of provocations from vessels of wrath, prepar'd for ruine, that he might *προδείξει τὴν ὀργὴν αὐτοῦ*, shew what he was able to do, the Lordship and Royalty he had over himself. The power of God is more manifest in his *Patience* to a multitude of Sinners, than it could be in Creating Millions of Worlds out of nothing; this was the *ὀργὴν αὐτοῦ*, a power over himself.

5. This *Patience* being a branch of Mercy, the exercise of it is *founded in the Death of Christ*. Without the consideration of this, we can give no account, why Divine *Patience* should extend it self to us, and not to the fallen Angels. The threatening extends it self to us, as well as to the fallen Angels. The threatening must necessarily have sunk man, as well as those glorious Creatures, had not Christ step into our relief. \* Had not Christ interposed to satisfy the Justice of God, man upon his sin had been actually bound over to punishment, as well as the fallen Angels were upon theirs, and been fettered in chains as strong as those Spirits feel. The reason why man was not hurl'd into the same deplorable condition upon his sin, as they were, is Christ's promise of taking our nature, and not theirs. Had God design'd Christ's taking their nature, the same *Patience* had been exercised towards them, and the same offers would have been made to them, as are made to us. In regard of these fruits of this *Patience*, Christ is said to buy the wickedest Apostates from him. *1 Pet. 2. 1. Denying the Lord that bought them;* such were bought by him, as *bring upon themselves just destruction, and whose damnation fumes not*, ver. 3. he purchased the continuance of their lives, and the stay of their execution, that offers of Grace might be made to them. This *Patience* must be either upon the account of the Law, or the Gospel; for there are no other rules, whereby God governs the World; a fruit of the Law it was not, that spake nothing but Curses after Disobedience, not a letter of Mercy was writ upon that: And therefore nothing of *Patience*.

Death and Wrath was denounced, no slowness to Anger intimated. It must be therefore upon the account of the Gospel, and a fruit of the *Covenant of Grace*, whereof Christ was Mediator. Besides this perfection being God's *waiting that he might be Gracious. Isaiah 30. 18.* that which made way for Gods Grace, made



way for his waiting to manifest it. God discovered not his Grace, but in Christ: And therefore discovered not his Patience but in Christ; 'tis in him he met with the satisfaction of his Justice, that he might have a ground for the manifestation of his Patience. And the Sacrifices of the Law, wherein the Life of a beast was accepted for the sin of a man, discovered the ground of his forbearance of them, to be the expectation of the *great sacrifice*, whereby sin was to be compleatly expiated. *Gen. 8. 21.* The publication of his Patience to the end of the World is presently after the sweet *savor* he found in *Noah's sacrifice*. The promised and design'd coming of Christ was the cause of that Patience God exercised before in the World. And his gathering the Elect together, is the reason of his Patience since his death.

6. The naturalness of his *Veracity* and *Holiness*, and the *strictness* of his *Justice*, are no bars to the exercise of his patience.

1. His *Veracity*. In those threatnings where the punishment is exprest, but not the time of inflicting it prefixt, and determin'd in the threatning, his *veracity* suffers no damage by the delaying Execution; so it be once done, though a long time after, the credit of his *Truth* stands unshaken: As when God promises a thing without fixing the time, he is at liberty to pitch upon what time he pleases for the performance of it without staining his faithfulness to his Word, by not giving the thing promised presently. Why should the deferring of Justice upon an offender, be any more against his *Veracity*, than his delaying an answer to the petitions of a suppliant? But the difference will lie in the threatning. *Gen. 2. 17.* *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt dye the death.* The time was there settled, *In that day, thou shalt dye*; some referre day to eating, not to dying; and render the sentence thus, I do not prohibit thee the eating this fruit for a day or two, but continually. In whatsoever day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt dye; but not understanding his dying that very day he should eat of it. Referring [*day*] to the extensiveness of the prohibition, as to time. But to leave this as uncertain, it may be answered; that as in some threatnings, a condition is implied, though not exprest; as in that positive denouncing of the destruction of *Nimreh*. *Jonah 3. 4.* *Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroy'd*; the condition is imply'd, unless they humble themselves, and repent, for upon their Repentance, the sentence was deferred. So here, *in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt dye the death*, or *certainly dye*, unless there be a way found for the expiation of thy crime, and the righting my honour; This *condition* in regard of the event, may as well be asserted to be implied in this threatning, as that of Repentance was in the other. Or rather, *thou shalt dye*, thou shalt die spiritually, thou shalt loose that image of mine in thy nature, that Righteousness which is as much the Life of thy Soul, as thy Soul is the life of thy Body; that Righteousness whereby thou art enabled to live to me, and thy own happiness. What the Soul is to the Body, a quickning Soul, that the image of God is to the Soul, a quickning image. Or *thou shalt dye the death*, or *certainly dye*, thou shalt be liable to death. \* And so it is to be understood, not of an actual death of the Body, but the merit of death, and the necessity of death; thou wilt be obnoxious to death, which will be avoided, if thou dost forbear to eat of the forbidden fruit; thou shalt be a guilty person, and so under a sentence of death, that I may when I please inflict it on thee. Death did come upon *Adam* that day, because his nature was vitiated. He was then also under an expectation of death, he was obnoxious to it, though that day it was not poured out upon him in the full bitterness and gall of it. As when the *Apostle* saith, *Rom. 8. 10.* *The Body is dead because of sin*, he speaks to the Living, and yet tells them, the body was dead because of sin; he means no more than that it was under a sentence, and so a necessity of dying though not actually dead. So thou shalt be under the sentence of death that day, as certainly as if that day thou shouldst sink into the dust. And as by his *Patience* towards man, not sending forth death upon him in all the bitter ingredients of it, his Justice afterwards was more eminent upon mans surety, than it would have been, if it had been then employ'd in all its severe operations upon man. So was his *Veracity*

\* *Per in loc.*



eminent also in making good this threatening, in inflicting the punishment included in it upon our nature assum'd by a mighty person, and upon that person in our nature, who was infinitely higher than our nature.

2. *His justice and righteousness are not prejudiced by his patience.* There is a hatred of the sin in his holiness, and a sentence pass'd against the sin in his justice, though the execution of that sentence be suspended, and the person reprieved by *patience*, which is implied; *Eccles. 8. 11. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily: therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil*; Sentence is pass'd, but a speedy execution is stop'd.

Some of the Heathens who would not imagine God unjust, and yet seeing the villanies and oppressions of men in the World remain unpunish'd, and frequently beholding prosperous wickedness, to free him from the charge of *injustice*, deny'd his providence, and actual Government of the World: for if he did take notice of humane affairs, and concern himself in what was done upon the Earth, they could not think an infinite goodness and *Justice* could be so slow, to punish oppressors, and relieve the miserable, and leave the World in that disorder under the injustice of men. They judg'd such a *patience* as was exercised by him, if he did govern the World, was drawn out beyond the line of fit and just. Is it not a presumption in men to prescribe a rule of *Righteousness* and conveniency to their Creator? It might be demanded of such, whether they never injur'd any in their lives? and when certainly they have one way or other; would they not think it a very unworthy, if not unjust thing, that a person so injur'd by them should take a speedy and severe revenge on them? And if every man should do the like, would there not be a speedy dispatch made of Mankind? Would not the World be a shambles, and men rush forwards to one anothers destruction, for the wrongs they have mutually received? If it be accounted a virtue in man, and no unrighteousness, not presently to be all on fire against an offence; by what right should any question the consistency of Gods *patience* with his *justice*? Do we praise the lenity of Parents to children, and shall we disparage the *long suffering* of God to men? We do not censure the righteousness of Physicians and Chirurgeons, because they cut not off a corrupt member this day as well as to morrow? And is it just to asperse God, because he doth deferr his vengeance, which man assumes to himself a right to do? We never account him a bad Governour, that deferr's the tryal, and consequently the condemnation and execution of a notorious offender, for important reasons, and beneficial to the publick, either to make the nature of his crime more evident, or to find out the rest of his complices by his discovery. A Governour indeed were unjust, if he commanded that which were unrighteous, and forbade that which were worthy and commendable; But if he delays the execution of a convict offender, for weighty reasons, either for the benefit of the state whereof he is the Ruler, or for some advantage to the offender himself, to make him have a sence of, and a regret for his offence, we account him not unjust for this. God doth not by his *patience* dispense with the holiness of his Law, nor cut off any thing from its due Authority. If men do strengthen themselves by his long suffering against his Law, 'tis their fault, not any unrighteousness in him. He will take a time to vindicate the *Righteousness* of his own commands, if men will wholly neglect the time of his *patience*, in forbearing to pay a dutiful observance to his Precept. If Justice be natural to him, and he cannot but punish sin, yet he is not necessitated to consume sinners, as the fire doth stubble put into it, which hath no command over its own qualities, to restrain them from acting; But God is a free agent, and may choose his owntime, for the distribution of that punishment his nature leads him to. Though he be naturally just, yet it is not so natural to him, as to deprive him of a dominion over his own acts, and a freedom in the exerting them what time he judgeth most convenient in his Wisdom. God is necessarily holy, and is necessarily angry with sin, his nature can never like it, and cannot but be displeased with it; yet he hath a liberty to restrain the effects of this anger for a time, without disgracing his holiness, or being interpreted to act unrighteously; As  
well



well as a *Prince* or *State* may suspend the execution of a Law, which they will never break, only for a time, and for a publick benefit.

If God should presently execute his *Justice*, this perfection of *patience* which is a part of his goodness, would never have an opportunity of discovery. Part of his Glory, for which he Created the World, would lye in obscurity from the knowledge of his creature. His *Justice* would be signal in the destruction of sinners, but this stream of his goodness would be stopp'd up from any motion. One perfection must not cloud another, God hath his seasons to discover all, one after another. *The times and seasons are in his own power. Act. 1. 7.* The seasons of manifesting his own perfections as well as other things; Succession of them in their distinct appearance makes no invasion upon the rights of any. If justice should complain of an injury from *patience*, because it is delay'd, *patience* hath more reason to complain of an injury from *justice*, that by such a plea it would be wholly obscur'd and unactive. For this perfection hath the shortest time to act its part of any, it hath no stage but this World to move in: Mercy hath a Heaven, and Justice a Hell, to display it self to Eternity, but *long suffering* hath only a short liv'd earth for the compass of its operation.

Again *Justice* is so far from being wrong'd by *Patience*, that it rather is made more illustrious, and hath the fuller scope to exercise it self; 'Tis the more righted for being deferred, and will have stronger grounds than before for its activity. The equity of it will be more apparent to every reason, the objections more fully answered against it when the way of dealing with sinners by *patience* hath been slighted. When this dam of long suffering is remov'd, the floods of fiery justice will rush down with more force and violence; *Justice* will be fully recompens'd for the delay, when after *Patience* is abus'd, it can spread it self over the offender with a more unquestionable Authority, it will have more arguments to hit the sinner in the teeth with, and silence him. There will be a sharper edge for every stroke, the sinner must not only pay for the score of his former sins, but the score of abus'd *patience*; so that *justice* hath no reason to commence a suit against God's slowness to anger. What it shall want by the fulness of mercy upon the truly penitent, it will gain by the contempt of *patience* on the impenitent abusers. When men by such a carriage are ripen'd for the stroke of justice, *justice* may strike without any regret in it self, or pull-back from mercy. The contempt of *long suffering* will silence the pleas of the one, and spirit the severity of the other. To conclude, since God hath glorified his *justice* on Christ, as a surety for sinners, his *patience* is so far from interfering with the rights of his justice, that it promotes it; 'Tis dispens'd to this end, that God might pardon with honour, both upon the score of purchased mercy, and contented justice; that by a penitent sinners return his mercy might be acknowledg'd free, and the satisfaction of his *Justice* by Christ be glorified in believing: for he is long suffering from an unwillingness, *that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance. 2 Pet. 3. 9. 1. c.* All to whom the promise is made, for to such the Apostle speaks, and calls it *long suffering to us ward*; And Repentance being an acknowledgment of the demerit of sin, and a breaking off unrighteousness, gives a particular glory to the freeness of mercy, and the equity of *Justice*.

## II. The 2d. thing; How this patience or slowness to anger is manifest.

1. To our *First Parents*. His *slowness to anger* was evidenced, in not directing his Artillery against them, when they first attempted to rebel. He might have struck them dead, when they began to bite at the temptation, and were inclinable to a surrender; for it was a degree of sinning, and a breach of Loyalty, as well, though not so much as the consummating Act. God might have given way to the floods of his wrath at the first spring of man's aspiring thoughts, when the monstrous motion of being as God began to be curdled in his heart; but he took no notice of any of their *Embryo* sins, till they came to a ripeness, and started out of the womb of their minds, into the open Air; And after he had brought his sin to perfection, God did not presently send that death upon him, which



which he had merited, but continued his Life to the space of 930 years. *Gen. 5. 5.* The Sun and Stars were not arrested, from doing their Office for him. Creatures were continued for his use, the earth did not swallow him up, nor a Thunderbolt from Heaven raze out the memory of him. Though he had deserved to be treated with such a severity for his ungrateful demeanour to his Creator and Benefactor, and affecting an equality with him, yet God continued him with a sufficiency for his content, after he turned rebel, though not with such a liberality as when he remain'd a Loyal Subject; And though he foresaw, that he would not make an end of sinning, but with an end of living, he used him not in the same manner, as he had used the Devils. He added dayes and years to him, after he had deserved death, and hath for this 5000 years continued the propagation of Mankind, and derived from his loyns an innumerable posterity, and hath crown'd multitudes of them with hoary heads; He might have extinguish'd humane race at the first, but since he hath preserved it till this day, it must be interpreted nothing else, but the effect of an admirable Patience.

2. *His slowness to anger is manifest to the Gentiles.* What they were, we need no other witness than the Apostle *Paul*, who summs up many of their crimes. *Rom. 1. 29. 30, 31, 32.* He doth preface the Catalogue with a comprehensive expression, *being filled with all unrighteousness*; And concludes it with a dreadful aggravation; *They not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* They were so soakt and naturaliz'd in wickedness, that they had no delight and found no sweetness in any thing else, but what was in it self abominable; All of them were plang'd in Idolatry and Superstition: none of them but either set up their great men, or creatures beneficial to the World, and some the damned Spirits in his stead, and paid an adoration to insensible Creatures or Devils, which was due to God. Some were so deprav'd in their lives and actions, that it seem'd to be the interest of the rest of the World, that they should have been extinguish'd for the instruction of their contemporaries and posterity. The best of them had turn'd all Religion into a fable, coyn'd a World of rites, some unnatural in themselves, and most of them unbecoming a rational creature to offer, and a Deity to accept; Yet he did not presently arm himself against them with Fire and Sword, nor stopt the course of their Generations, nor tare out all those reliques of natural light, which were left in their minds. He did not do what he might have done, but he winkt at the times of that ignorance, *Act. 17. 30.* their ignorant Idolatry: for that it refers to, *ver. 29. They thought the God-head was like to Gold or Silver, or stone graven by Art, and mens device*; *unwisely* overlooking them; He demean'd himself so, as if he did not take notice of them. He winkt as if he did not see them, and would not deal so severely with them: the eye of his Justice seem'd to wink, in not calling them to an account for their sin.

3. *His slowness to anger is manifest to the Israelites.* You know how often they are call'd a *stiff-necked people*; they are said to do evil *from their youth*, i. e. from the time wherein they were erected a Nation and Common-wealth; and that *the City had been a provocation of his anger, and of his fury from the day that they built it, even to this day*, i. e. the day of *Jeremiah's* Prophecy, *that he should remove it from before his face. Jer. 32. 31.* From the dayes of *Solomon* say some, which is too much a curtailing of the Text, as though their provocations had taken date no higher than from the time of *Solomon's* rearing the Temple, and beautifying the City, whereby it seem'd to be a new Building. They began more early, they scarce discontinued their revolting from God, they were a grief to him 40 years together in the Wilderness, *Psal. 95. 10.* Yet he suffer'd their manners, *Act. 13. 18.* He bore with their ill behaviour, and sawcyness towards him; And no sooner was *Joshua's* head laid, and the Elders that were their conductors, gathered to their fathers, but the next Generation forsook God, and smutt'd themselves with the Idolatry of the Nations; *Judg. 2. 7. 10, 11.* And when he punish'd them by prospering the Arms of their enemies against them, they were no sooner delivered upon their cry and humiliation, but they began a new Scene of Idolatry.



latry. And though he brought upon them the power of the *Babylonian Empire*, and laid chains upon them, to bring them to their right mind. And at 70 years end he struck off their chains, by altering the whole posture of affairs in that part of the World for their sakes; Overturning one Empire, and settling another for their Restoration to their antient City. And though they did not after disown him for their God, and set up *Baal in his Throne*, yet they multiplied foolish traditions, whereby they impaired the Authority of the Law; yet he sustained them with a wonderful *Patience*, and preferred them before all other people in the first offers of the Gospel; And after they had outrag'd not only his servants the Prophets, but his Son the Redeemer, yet he did not forsake them, but employed his Apostles to solicit them, and publish among them the Doctrine of Salvation. So that his treating this people, might well be call'd *much long suffering*, it being, above 1500 years, wherein he bore with them, or mildly punished them, far less than their deserts. Their coming out of *Egypt* being about the year of the World 2450, and their final destruction as a Common-wealth, not till about 40 years after the death of Christ; And all this while his *Patience* did sometimes wholly restrain his Justice, and sometimes let it fall upon them in some few drops, but made no total devastation of their Country, nor wrote his revenge in extraordinary bloody Characters, till the Roman conquest, wherein he put a period to them, both as a Church and State.

*In particular this Patience is manifest.*

1. In his giving warnings of Judgments, before he orders them to go forth. He doth not punish in a passion, and hastily; He speaks before he strikes, and speaks that he may not strike. Wrath is publisht, before it is executed, and that a long time; An 120 years Advertisement was given to a debauch'd World, before the Heavens were open'd, to spout down a deluge upon them. He will not be accused of coming unawares upon a people; He inflicts nothing, but what he foretold either immediately to the people that provoke him, or anciently to them that have been their fore-runners in the same provocation. *Hos. 7. 12. I will chastise them, as their Congregation hath heard.* Many of the leaves of the Old Testament are full of those Prefages and Warnings of approaching judgment. These make up a great part of the Volume of it in various Editions, according to the State of the several provoking times. Warnings are given to those people that are most abominable in his sight; *Zeph. 2. 1, 2. Gather your selves together, yea gather together Oh Nation, not desired; 'tis a Micol's, Oh Nation abhorr'd, before the decree bring forth.* He sends his Heralds, before he sends his Armies; He summons them by the voice of his Prophets, before he confounds them by the voice of his Thunders. When a parley is beaten, a white flagg of Peace is hung out, before a black flagg of fury is set up. He seldom cuts down men by his Judgments, before he hath *hewed them by his Prophets*; *Hos. 6. 5.* Not a remarkable judgment, but was foretold: the Flood to the Old World by *Noah*: The Famine to *Egypt* by *Joseph*; The Earthquake by *Amos*. *Amos 1. 1.* The storm from *Chaldea* by *Jeremy*; The Captivity of the Ten Tribes by *Hosea*; The total destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the Temple by *Christ himself*; He hath chosen the best persons in the World to give those intimations; *Noah*, the most Righteous person on the earth for the Old World; And his Son the most beloved person in Heaven for the Jews in the later time. And in other parts of the World, and in the later times, where he hath not warned by Prophets, he hath supplied it by Prodigies in the Air and Earth; Histories are full of such Items from Heaven. Lesser judgments are fore-warners of greater, as Lightnings before Thunder, are Messengers to tell us of a succeeding clap.

1. He doth often give warning of Judgments. He comes not to extremity, till he hath often shaken the rod over Men; He thunders often, before he crusheth them with his Thunder-bolt; He doth not till after the first and second admonition punish a rebel, as he would have us reject a Heretick. *He speaks once, yea twice, Job 33. 14. and man perceives it not*; He sends one Message after another, and waits



waits the success of many messages, before he strikes. *Eight Prophets* were ordered to acquaint the Old World with approaching judgment : 2 *Pet.* 2. 5. He saved *Noah* the 8th. person, a Preacher of Righteousness, bringing in the Flood upon the World of the ungodly, called the 8th. in respect of his Preaching, not in regard of his preservation ; He was the 8th. Preacher, in order from the beginning of the World, that endeavoured to restore the World to the way of Righteousness. Most indeed consider him here, as the 8th. person saved, so do our Translators : and therefore add *Person*, which is not in the Greek. Some others consider him here, as the 8th. Preacher of Righteousness, reckoning *Enoch* the Son of *Seth* the first : grounding it upon *Gen.* 4. 26. *Then began men to call on the Name of the Lord*, Hebr. *Then it was began to call in the Name of the Lord* ; *καὶ ἐνέμαρτον τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου*. Sept. *He began to call in the Name of the Lord* ; which others render, he began to preach, or call upon men in the Name of the Lord. The word *קרא* signifies to Preach, or to call upon men by Preaching. *Prov.* 1. 21. *Wisdom cryeth, or preaches* ; And if this be so, as it is very probable, 'tis easie to reckon him the 8th. Preacher, by numbering the successive heads of the Generations ; *Gen.* 5. Beginning at *Enosh* the first Preacher of Righteousness, \* So many there were before God choakt the Old World with water, and swept them away ; 'Tis clear he often did admonish by his Prophets, the Jews of their sin, and the wrath which should come upon them. One Prophet, *Hosea*, Prophesied 70 years ; for he Prophesied in the dayes of 4 Kings of *Judah*, and one of *Israel*, *Jeroboam*, the Son of *Joash*, *Hos.* 1. 1. or *Jeroboam* the second of that name. *Uzziah* King of *Judah*, in whose Reign *Hosea* Prophesied, lived 38 years after the death of *Jeroboam*. The Second *Jotham*, *Uzziah's* Successor, Reign'd 16 years, *Ahaz* 16, *Hezekiah* 29 years ; Now take nothing of *Hezekiah's* time, and Date the beginning of his Prophesie from the last year of *Jeroboam's* Reign, and the time of *Hosea's* Prophesie, will be 70 years compleat ; Wherein God warned those people, and waited the return particularly of *Israel* ; \* and not less than 5 of those, we call the lesser Prophets, were sent to foretell the destruction of the Ten Tribes, and to call them to Repentance : *Hosea*, *Joel*, *Amos*, *Micah*, *Jonah* ; And though we have nothing of *Jonah's* Prophesie in this concern of *Israel*, yet that he lived in the time of the same *Jeroboam*, and Prophesied things, which are not upon record in the book of *Jonah*, is clear ; 2 *King.* 14. 25. And besides those, *Isaiab* Prophesied also in the Reign of the same Kings, as *Hosea* did ; *Isa.* 1. 1. And it is God's usual method, to send forth his servants, and when their admonitions are slighted, he Commissions others, before he sends out his destroying Armies. *Mat.* 22. 3, 4, 7.

\* Vid. Gells  
αγγελος-  
της.

\* Sanctius. Pro-  
legom. in Ho-  
sea Prolog. the  
3d.

2. He doth often give warning of Judgments, that he might not pour out his wrath. He summons them to a surrender of themselves, and a return from their Rebellion, that they might not feel the force of his Armes. He offers peace before he shakes off the dust of his feet, that his despised peace might not return in vain to him, to sollicite a revenge from his anger. He hath a right to punish upon the first Commission of a crime, but he warns men of what they have deserved, of what his Justice moves him to inflict, that by having recourse to his mercy, he might not exercise the rights of his Justice. God sought to kill *Moses* for not circumcising his Son. *Exod.* 4. 24. Could God, that sought it, miss of a way to do it ? Could a creature lurch, or flie from him ? God put on the garb of an enemy, that *Moses* might be discouraged from being an instrument of his own ruine : God manifested an anger against *Moses* for his neglect, as if he would then have destroyed him, that *Moses* might prevent it, by casting off his carelessness, and doing his duty. He sought to kill him by some evident sign, that *Moses* might escape the judgment by his obedience. He threatens *Niniveh* by the Prophet with destruction, that *Niniveh's* Repentance might make void the Prophesie. He fights with men by the Sword of his mouth, that he might not pierce them by the Sword of his wrath. He threatens, that men might prevent the execution of his threatening ; He terrifies, that he might not destroy, but that men by humiliation may lie prostrate before him, and move the bowels of his mercy to a louder



found, than the voice of his Anger. He takes time to whet his Sword, that men may turn themselves from the edge of it. He roars like a Lion, that men, by hearing his voice, may shelter themselves from being torn by his Wrath. There is patience in the sharpest threatening, that we may avoid the scourge. Who can charge God with an eagerness to revenge, that sends so many *Heralds*, and to *often* before he strikes, that he might be prevented from striking? His threatnings have not so much of a black flag, as of an Olive branch. He lifts his up hand, before he strikes, that men might see and avert the stroke. *Isaiah 26. 11.*

2. *His Patience is manifest, in long delaying his threatned Judgements, though he finds no Repentance in the Rebels.* He doth sometimes delay his lighter punishments, because he doth not delight in torturing his Creatures; but he doth longer delay his destroying punishments, such as put an end to mens happiness, and remit them to their final and unchangeable state; because he *doth not delight in the death of a Sinner.* While he is preparing his arrows, he is waiting for an occasion to lay them aside, and dull their points, that he may with honour march back again, and disband his Armies. He brings lighter smarts sooner, that men might not think him asleep, but he suspends the more terrible judgments, that men might be led to Repentance. He scatters not his consuming fires at the first, but brings on ruining vengeance with a *slow pace*; *sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed. Eccles. 8. 11.* The Jews therefore say that *Michael*, the Minister of Justice, flies with one wing, but *Gabriel* the Minister of Mercy with two. *An 120 years* did God wait upon the old World, and delay their punishment, all the time the *Ark* was preparing. *1 Pet. 3. 20.* Wherein that wicked Generation did not enjoy only a *bare patience*, but a *striving patience.* *Gen. 6. 3. My Spirit shall not always strive with man, yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years,* the days wherein I will strive with him; that his Long-suffering might not lose all its fruit, and remit the objects of it into the hands of consuming Justice. It was the *Tenth Generation of the World from Adam*, when the deluge overflow'd it, so long did God bear with them. And the *Tenth Generation from Noah* wherein *Sodom* was consumed. God did not come to keep his Assizes in *Sodom*, till the cry of their sins was very strong, that it had been a wrong to his Justice to have restrain'd it any longer. The cry was so loud, that he could not be at quiet, as it were, on his Throne of Glory for the disturbing noise. *Gen. 18. 20, 21.* Sin transgresseth the Law, the Law being violated, solicites Justice, Justice being urg'd pleads for punishment; the cry of their sins did as it were force him from Heaven to come down, and examine what cause there was for that clamour. Sin cries loud and long, before he takes his Sword in hand. *Four hundred years* he kept off deserved destruction from the *Amorites*, and deferr'd making good his promise to *Abraham*, of giving *Canaan* to his Posterity out of his Long-suffering to the *Amorites.* *Gen. 15. 16.* In the *fourth Generation* they shall come hither again, for the iniquity of the *Amorites* is not yet full. Their measure was filling then, but not so full as to put a stop to any further patience till *four hundred years* after. The usual time in succeeding Generations from the denouncing of Judgments to the execution, is *forty years*, this some ground upon *Ezek. 4. 6. thou shalt bear the iniquity of the House of Judah forty days,* taking each day for a year. Though *Hosea* lived *seventy years*, yet from the beginning of his prophesying Judgments against *Israel* to the pouring them out upon that Idolatrous People, it was *forty years.* *Hosea* as was mentioned before, prophesied against them in the days of *Jeroboam the second*, in whose time God did wonderfully deliver *Israel.* *2 Kings 14. 26. 27.* From that time till the total destruction of the *ten Tribes* it was *forty years*, as may easily be computed from the Story, *2 Kings 15, 16, 17. chapters.* by the Reign of the succeeding Kings. So *forty years* after the most horrid villany that ever was committed in the face of the Sun, viz. The Crucifying the Son of God, was *Jerusalem* destroyed, and the inhabitants captiv'd; so long did God delay a visible punishment for such an outrage. Sometimes he prolongs sending a threatned judgment upon a meer shadow of humiliation; so he did that denounced against *Ahab.* He turn'd it over to his posterity, and adjourn'd it to another season. *1 Kings 21. 29.* He doth not issue out an Arrest upon



upon one Transgression, you often find him not commencing a suit against men, till *three and four Transgressions*. The first of *Amos*, all along that chapter, and the second chapter; for *three and four*, i. e. *seven*. A certain number for an uncertain. He gives not orders to his judgments to march, till men be obstinate, and refuse any commerce with him. He stops them, till *there be no remedy*. 2 Chron. 26. 16. It must be a *great wickedness* that gives vent to them, Hos. 10. 15. Heb. *your wickedness of wickedness*. He is so *slow to anger*, and stays the punishment his enemies deserve, that he may seem to have forgot his kindness to his Friends. Psal. 44. 24. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction, and oppression?* He lets his people groan under the yoke of their Enemies, as if he were made up of kindness to his Enemies, and anger against his Friends. This delaying of punishment to evil men, is visible in his suspending the terrifying acts of Conscience, and supporting it only, in its checking, admonishing, and controuling acts. The *patience* of a Governour is seen in the patient mildness of his Deputy. *Dauids* Conscience did not terrifie him, till *nine months* after his sin of Murder. Should God set open the Mouth of this power within us, not only the Earth, but our own bodies, and Spirits, would be a burden to us. 'Tis long before God puts Scorpions into the hands of mens Consciences, to scourge them. He holds back the rod, waiting for the hour of our return, as if that would be a recompence for our offences, and his forbearance.

III. *His Patience is manifest in his unwillingness to execute his Judgments, when he can delay no longer. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men.* Lament. 3. 33. Heb. *He doth not afflict from his Heart*. He takes no pleasure in it, as he is Creator. The height of mens provocations, and the necessity of the preserving his rights, and vindicating his Laws, obligeth him to it, as he is the Governour of the World. As a Judge may willingly condemn a Malefactor to death out of affection to the Laws, and desire to preserve the order of Government, but unwillingly out of Compassion to the offender himself. When he resolved upon the destruction of the old World, he spake it, as a God grieved with an occasion of punishment, Gen. 6. 6, 7. *compared together*. When he came to reckon with *Adam*, he walked, he did not run with his Sword in his hand upon him, as a mighty man with an eagerness to destroy him. Gen. 3. 8. And that *in the cool of the day*, a time when men tired in the day, are unwilling to engage in a hard employment. His exercising judgment, is a *coming out of his place*. Isaiah 26. 21. *Micah* 1. 3. He comes out of his station, to exercise judgment; a Throne is more his place than a tribunal. Every prophetic loaded with threatnings, is call'd the *Burden of the Lord*, a burden to him to execute it, as well as to men to suffer it. Though *three Angels* came to *Abraham* about the punishment of *Sodom* whereof one *Abraham* speaks to as to God, yet but *two* appear'd at the destruction of *Sodom*; as if the Governour of the World were unwilling to be present at such dreadful work. Gen. 19. 1. And when the Man that had the inkhorn by his side, that was appointed, to mark those that were to be preserved in the common destruction, return'd to give an account of the performing his commission, Ezek. 9. 10. We read not of the return of those that were to kill, as if God delighted only to hear again of his works of Mercy, and had no mind to hear again of his severe proceedings. \* The Jews to shew Gods unwillingness to punish, imagine that Hell was created the second day: Because that days work is not pronounced good by God, as all the other days works are, Gen. 1. 8.

\* Mercy in Gen. 1. 5.

1. *When God doth punish, he doth it with some regret.* \* When he hurles down his thunders, he seems to do it with a backward hand: Because with an unwilling heart. He created, saith *Chrysostom*, the World in six days, but was seven days in destroying one City *Jericho*, which he had before devoted to be razed to the ground. What is the reason saith he, that God is so quick to build up, but slow to pull down? His Goodness excites his power to the One, but is not earnest to perswade him to the Other. When he comes to strike, he doth it with a sigh or groan. Isaiah 1. 24. *Ab I will ease me of my adversaries, and avenge me on my Enemies.* Ab, a note of grief. So Hos. 6. 4. *Oh Ephraim*

\* Crisost. Decad. 2. p. 153.



what shall I do unto thee? Oh Judah, what shall I do unto thee? 'Tis an *Asyndetion* a figure in Rhetorick as if God were troubled, that he must deal so sharply with them, and give them up to their Enemies. I have tried all means to reclaim you, I have used all ways of kindness, and nothing prevails. What shall I do? my Mercy invites me to spare them and their ingratitude provokes me to ruine them. God had born with that people of *Israel* almost three hundred years, from the setting up of the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*; sent many a Prophet to warn them, and spent many a rod to reform them. And when he comes to execute his threatnings, he doth it with a conflict in himself. *Hosea* 11. 8. *How shall I give thee up Oh Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel?* As if there were a pull-back in his own Bowels, he solemnizeth their approaching funeral with a hearty groan; and takes his farewell of the dying Malefactor with a pang in himself. How often in former times when he had sign'd a warrant for their Execution, did he call it back? *Psal.* 78. 38. *Many a time turn'd he his anger away.* Many a time he recall'd, or order'd his Anger, to return again as the word signifies, as if he were irresolute what to do. He recall'd it, as a man doth his Servant several times, when he is sending him upon an unwelcome message; or as a tender hearted Prince wavers, and trembles, when he is to sign a Writ for the death of a Rebel, that hath been before his favorite, as if when he had sign'd the Writ, he blotted out his name again, and flung away the Pen. And his method is remarkable, when he came to punish *Sodom*; though the cry of their sin had been fierce in his ears, yet when he comes to make inquisition, he declares his intention to *Abraham*, as if he were desirous, that *Abraham* should have helped him to some arguments, to stop the outgoings of his judgment. He gave liberty to the best person in the World, to stand in the gap, and enter into a treaty with him, to shew (saith one \*) how willingly his mercy would have compounded with his justice for their Redemption. And *Abraham* interceded so long, till he was ashamed for pleading the cause of patience and Mercy, to the wrong of the rights of divine Justice. Perhaps had *Abraham* had the courage to ask, God would have had the compassion to grant a reprieve just at the time of Execution.

\* Pierce sinner implead.  
Pag. 227.

2. His *Patience is manifest*, in that when he begins to send out his judgments, he doth it by degrees. His Judgments are as the *Morning Light*, which goes forth by degrees, in the Hemisphere. *Hos.* 6. 5. He doth not shoot all his thunders at once, and bring his sharpest judgments in array at one time, but gradually, that a people may have time to turn to him. *Joel* 1. 4. First the *Palmer-worm*, then the *Locust*, then the *Canker-worm*, then the *Caterpillar*; What one left, the other was to eat, if there were not a timely return. A Jewish Writer \* saith, these judgments came not all in one year, but one year after another. The *Palmer-worm* and *Locust* might have eaten all, but divine Patience set bounds to the devouring creatures. God had been first as a *moth* to *Israel*; *Hos.* 5. 12. *Therefore will I be to the house of Ephraim as a Moth*; *Rivet* translates it, *I have been*, in the Hebr. 'tis I without adding, I have been, or I will be, and more probably I have been; I was as a *Moth*, which makes little holes in a garment, and consumes it not all at once; And as *rottenness* to the house of *Judah*, or a worm that eats into wood by degrees. Indeed this people had consumed insensibly, partly by civil combustions, change of Governours, Forreign Invasions, yet they were as obstinate in their Idolatry as ever; At last God would be no longer to them as a *Moth*, but as a *Lion*, tear, and go away; *ver.* 14. So, *Hos.* 2. God had disowned *Israel* for his Spouse, *ver.* 2. *She is not my Wife, neither am I her Husband*, yet he had not taken away her Ornaments, which by the right of divorce he might have done, but still expected her Reformation, for that the threatening intimates, *ver.* 3. let her put away her Whoredom, *least I strip her naked, and set her as in the day when she was born.* If she returned, she might recover what she had lost, if not, she might be stript of what remained. Thus God dealt with *Judah*, *Ezek.* 9. 3. The Glory of God goes first from the *Cherub* to the *Threshold* of the house, and stayes there, as if he had a mind to be invited back again; then

\* Kimchi.



then it goes from the Threshold of the house, and stands over the *Clerubims*, as if upon a penitent call it would drop down again to its antient Station and Seat, over which it hovered; *Ezek. 10. 18.* And when he was not solicited to return, he departs out of the City, and stood upon the Mountain, which is on the East part of the City, *Ezek. 11. 23.* looking still towards, and hovering about the Temple, which was on the East of *Jerusalem*, as if loath to depart, and abandon the place and people. He walks so leisurely with his Rod in his hand, as if he had a mind rather to fling it away, than use it. His *Patience* in not pouring out all his Vials, is more remarkable than his wrath in pouring out one or two. Thus hath God made his slowness to anger visible to us in the gradual punishment of us; First, the *Pestilence* on this City, then *Firing* our Houses, *Consumption* of Trade, these have not been answered with such a carriage as God expects, therefore a greater is reserved. I dare prognosticate, upon reasons you may gather from what hath been spoke before, if I be not much mistaken, the 40 yeares of his usual *Patience* are very near expired, he hath inflicted some, that he might be met within a way of Repentance, and omit with honour the inflicting the remainder.

4. *His Patience is manifest, in moderating his judgments, when he sends them.* Doth he empty his Quiver of his Arrows, or exhaust his magazines of thunder? No, he could roul one Thunder-bolt successively upon all Mankind; 'Tis as easie with him to Create a perpetual motion of Lightning and Thunder, as of the Sun and Stars, and make the World as terrible by the one, as it is delightful by the other. He opens not all his store, he sends out a light party to skirmish with men, and puts not in array his whole Army, *He stirs not up all his wrath, Psal. 78. 38.* he doth but pinch, where he might have torn asunder; When he takes away much, he leaves enough to support us. If he had stirred up all his anger, he had taken away all, and our lives to boot. He rakes up but a few sparks, takes but one firebrand to fling upon men, when he might discharge the whole Furnace upon them; He sends but a few drops out of the Cloud, which he might make to break in the grofs, and fall down upon our heads to overwhelm us; he abates much of what he might do. When he might sweep away a whole Nation by deluges of water, corruption of the Air, or convulsions of the Earth, or by other wayes that are not wanting at his order. He picks out only *some* Persons, *some* Families, *some* Cities, sends a plague into one house, and not into another; here is *Patience* to the stock of a Nation, while he inflicts punishment upon some of the most notorious sinners in it. *Herod* is suddenly snatcht away, being willingly flattered into the thoughts of his being a God; God sing'd out the chief in the herd, for whose sake he had been affronted by the rabble. *Act. 12. 22, 23.* Some find him sparing them, while others feel him destroying them; He arrests some, when he might seize all, all being his Debtors; And often in great desolations brought upon a people for their sin, he hath left a *stump* in the Earth, as *Daniel* speaks, *Dan. 4. 15.* for a Nation to grow upon it again, and arise to a stronger constitution. He doth punish *less than our iniquities deserve, Ezra 9. 13.* and rewards us *not according to our iniquities. Psal. 103. 10.* The greatness of any punishment in this Life, answers not the greatness of the crime. Though there be an equity in whatsoever he doth, yet there is not an equality to what we deserve. Our iniquities would justifie a severer treating of us; His Justice goes not here to the end of its line, 'tis stopped in its progress, and the blows of it weakned by his *Patience*; He did not curse the Earth after *Adam's* fall, that it should bring forth no fruit, but that it should not bring forth fruit without the wearysome toyl of man, and subjected him to distempers presently, but inflicted not death immediately; while he punished him, he supported him; And while he expelled him from Paradise, he did not order him not to cast his eye towards it, and conceive some hopes of regaining that happy place.

5. *His Patience is seen in giving great mercies after provocations.* He is so slow to anger, that he heaps many kindnesses upon a rebel, instead of punishment.  
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There is a prosperous wickedness, wherein the provokers strength continues firm: The troubles, which like Clouds drop upon others, are blown away from them, and they are *not plagued like other men*, that have a more worthy demeanour towards God. *Psal. 73. 3, 4, 5.* He doth not only continue their lives, but sends out fresh beams of his goodness upon them, and calls them by his Blessings, that they may acknowledge their own fault, and his bounty, which he is not obliged to by any gratitude, he meets with from them, but by the richness of his own patient nature: for he finds the unthankfulness of men, as great as his benefits to them. He doth not only continue his outward mercies, while we continue our sins, but sometimes gives fresh benefits after new provocations: that if possible he might excite an ingenuity in men. When *Israel* at the Red Sea flung dirt in the face of God, by quarrelling with his servant *Moses* for bringing them out of *Egypt*, and misjudging God in his design of deliverance, and were ready to submit themselves to their former oppressors, *Exod. 14. 11, 12.* which might justly have urged God to say to them, take your own course; yet he is not only patient under their unjust charge, but *makes bare his Arm in a deliverance at the Red Sea*, that was to be an amazing monument to the World in all Ages; and afterwards when they repiningly quarrelled with him in their wants in the Wilderness, he did not only not revenge himself upon them, or cast off the conduct of them, but bore with them by a miraculous long suffering, and supplied them with miraculous provision, Manna from Heaven, and Water from a Rock. Food is given to support us, and Cloaths to cover us, and Divine *Patience* makes the creatures, which we turn to another use, than what they were at first intended for, serve us contrary to their own *Genius*: For had they reason, no question but they would complain, to be subjected to the service of man, who hath been so ungrateful to their Creator, and groan at the abuse of God's *Patience*, in the abuse they themselves suffer from the hands of man.

6. *All this is more manifest, if we consider the provocations he hath.* Wherein his *slowness to Anger* infinitely transcends the *Patience* of any creature; nay the Spirits of all the Angels and Glorified Saints in Heaven, would be too narrow to bear the sins of the World for one day, nay not so much as the sins of Churches, which is a little spot in the whole World: 'tis because *he is the Lord*, one of an infinite power over himself, that not only the whole Mass of the *Rebellious World*, but of the *Sons of Jacob* (either considered as a Church and Nation springing from the loyns of *Jacob*, or considered as the Regenerate part of the World, sometimes called the *Seed of Jacob*,) are *not consumed*. *Mal. 3. 6.* A *Jonah* was angry with God, for recalling his Anger from a sinful people; Had God committed the Government of the World to the Glorified Saints, who are perfect in Love and Holiness, the World would have had an end long ago; They would have acted that, which they sue for at the hands of God, and is not granted them. *Rev. 6. 10.* *How long Lord holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood, on them that dwell on the Earth?* God hath designs of *Patience* above the World, above the unsinning Angels, and perfectly renewed Spirits in Glory. The greatest Created long suffering is infinitely disproportion'd to the Divine; Fire from Heaven would have been showered down before the greatest part of a day were spent, if a Created *Patience* had the conduct of the World, though that creature were possessed with the spirit of *Patience*, extracted from all the creatures which are in Heaven, or are, or ever were upon the earth. Methinks *Moses* intimates this; for as soon as God had passed by proclaiming his Name gracious, and long suffering; As soon as ever *Moses* had paid his Adoration, he falls a Praying, that God would go with the *Israelites*; *Exod. 34. 8, 9.* *For it is a stiffneck'd people*: What an Argument is here for God to go along with them? He might rather, since he had heard him but just before say, he would *by no means clear the guilty*, desire God to stand further off from them, for fear the fire of his wrath should burst out from him, to burn them as he did the *Sodomites*. But he considers, that as none but God had such anger to destroy them, so none but God had such a *Patience* to bear with them; 'Tis as much as if he should have said,  
Lord



Lord! if thou shouldst send the most tender hearted Angel in Heaven to have the guidance of this people, they would be a lost people; A period will quickly be set to their lives, no Created strength can restrain its power from crushing such a stiff-neck'd people; Flesh and Blood cannot bear them, nor any Created Spirit of a greater might.

1. Consider the greatness of the provocations. No light matter, but *actions of a great defiance*: What is the practical Language of most in the World, but that of *Pharaoh? Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?* How many question his being, and more, his Authority? What blasphemies of him, what reproaches of his Majesty? Men *drinking up iniquity like water* and with a hast and ardency *rushing into sin, as the horse into the battle*. What is there in the reasonable creature, that hath the quickest capacity, and the deepest obligation to serve him, but opposition and enmity, a slight of him in every thing, yea the services most seriously performed, unsuited to the royalty and purity of so great a Being? Such provocations as dare him to his face, that are a burden to so righteous a Judge, and so great a lover of the Authority and Majesty of his Laws; That were there but a spark of anger in him, 'tis a wonder it doth not shew it self; When he is invaded in all his attributes, 'tis astonishing that this single one of *Patience* and Meekness, should withstand the assault of all the rest of his perfections; His being which is attack'd by sin, speaks for vengeance, his Justice cannot be imagin'd to stand silent, without charging the sinner. His Holiness cannot but encourage his Justice to urge its pleas, and be an Advocate for it. His Omniscience proves the truth of all the charge; and his abused mercy hath little encouragement, to make opposition to the Indictment; Nothing but *Patience* stands in the gap to keep off the arrest of judgment from the sinner.

2. His *Patience* is manifest, if you consider the *multitudes of these provocations*. Every man hath sin enough in a day to make him stand amazed at Divine *Patience*, and to call it as well as the Apostle did, *all long suffering*. 1 Tim. 1. 16. How few duties of a perfectly right stamp are performed? What unworthy considerations mix themselves like dross, with our purest and sincerest Gold? How more numerous are the respects of the Worshipers of him to themselves, than unto him? How many services are paid him, not out of love to him, but because he should do us no hurt, and some service; When we do not so much design to please him, as to please our selves by expectations of a reward from him? What Master would endure a servant that endeavoured to please him, only because he should not kill him? Is that former charge of God upon the Old World yet out of date, That the *imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man was only evil, and that continually*? Gen. 6. 5. Was not the New World as chargeable with it as the Old? Certainly it was; Gen. 8. 21. And is of as much force this very minute, as it was then; How many are the sins against knowledge, as well as those of ignorance; Presumptuous sins as well as those of infirmity? How numerous those of Omission and Commission? \* 'Tis above the reach of any man's understanding to conceive all the blasphemies, Oaths, Thefts, Adulteries, Murders, Op-  
\* Lessas pag. 152.  
 pressions, contempt of Religion, the open Idolatries of Turks and Heathens, the more spiritual and refin'd Idolatries of others. Add to those the ingratitude of those that profess his name, their pride, earthliness, carelessness, sluggishness to divine duties; and in every one of those a *multitude of provocations*; The whole man being engag'd in every sin, the understanding contriving it, the will embracing it, the affections complying with it, and all the members of the body instruments in the acting the unrighteousness of it; Every one of these faculties bestowed upon men by him, are armed against him in every act: and in every employment of them there is a distinct provocation, though center'd in one sinful end and object. What are the offences, all the men of the World receive from their fellow creatures, to the injuries God receives from men, but as a small dust of earth to the whole mass of Earth and Heaven too? What multitudes of sins is one prophane wretch guilty of in the space of 20, 40, 50 years? Who can com-  
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compute the vast number of his transgressions, from the first use of reason to the time of the separation of his Soul from his Body: from his *entrance* into the World to his *exit*? What are those, to those of a whole Village of the like Inhabitants? What are those, to those of a great City? Who can number up all the foul mouth'd Oaths, the beastly excess, the goatish uncleanness committed in the space of a day, year, twenty years in this City, much less in the whole Nation, least of all in the whole World? Were it no more than the common Idolatry of former ages, when the whole World turn'd their backs upon their Creator, and pass'd him by to sue to a Creature, a stock or stone, or a degraded spirit. How provoking would it be to a Prince to see a whole City under his Dominion deny him a respect; and pay it to his scullion, or the common Executioner he employs? Add to this the unjust invasions of Kings, the oppressions exercised upon men, all the private and publick sins that have been in the World, ever since it began. The Gentiles were describ'd by the Apostle, *Rom. 1. 29, 30, 31.* in a black character, *They were haters of God*; yet how did the *Riches of his patience* preserve multitudes of such dilingenuous persons, and how *many millions of such haters of him* breath every day in his Air, and are maintained by his bounty, have their tables for'd and their cups fill'd to the brim, and that too in the midst of reiterated rebellings of their enmity against him? All are under sufficient *provocations* of him to the highest indignation. The presiding Angels over Nations could not forbear, in Love and Honour to their Governour, to arm themselves to the destruction of their several charges, if *Divine patience* did not set them a pattern, and their obedience incline them to expect his Orders, before they act what their zeal would prompt them to. The Devils would be glad of a Commission to destroy the World, but that his *patience* puts a stop to their fury, as well as his own Justice.

3. Consider the *long time of this patience*. He spread out his hand *all the day* to a rebellious World. *Isaiah 65. 2.* All mens day, all Gods day which is a *thousand years*, he hath born with the gross of mankind, with all the Nations of the World in a long *succession of ages for five thousand years* and upwards already, and will bear with them, till the time comes for the Worlds dissolution. He hath suffered the monstrous acts of men, and endur'd the contradictions of a sinful World against himself, from the first sin of *Adam* to the last committed this minute. The line of his *patience* hath run along with the duration of the World to this day; and there is not any one of *Adams* posterity but hath been expensive to him, and partaked of the riches of it.

4. *All these he bears when he hath a sense of them.* He sees every day the Roll and Catalogue of sin increasing, he hath a *distinct view* of every one from the sin of *Adam* to the last, fill'd up in his *Omniscience*; and yet gives no order for the arrest of the World. He knows men fitted for destruction, all the instants he exerciseth *long-suffering* towards them, which makes the Apostle call it not simply long suffering without the addition of *πολλή*, *much long-suffering*. *Rom. 9. 23.* There is not a grain in the whole Mass of sin, that he hath not a distinct knowledge of, and of the quality of it. He perfectly understands the greatness of his own Majesty that is vilified, and the nature of the offence that doth disparage him. He is solicited by his Justice, directed by his *Omniscience*, and armed with judgments to vindicate himself, but his arm is restrained by *patience*. To conclude no indignity is hid from him, no iniquity is beloved by him, the hatred of their sinfulness is infinite, and the knowledge of the malice is exact. The subsisting of the World under such weighty provocations, so numerous, so long time, and with his full sense of every one of them, is an evidence of such a *forbearance* and *long-suffering*, that the addition of *Riches* which the Apostle puts to it. *Rom. 2. 4.* labours with an insufficiency clearly to display it.

### III. Why God doth exercise so much patience.

1. To shew himself appeasable. God did not declare by his *patience* to former ages,



ages, or any age, that he was appeased with them, or that they were in his favour; but that he was appeasable, that he was not an implacable Enemy, but that they might find him favourable to them, if they did seek after him. The continuance of the World by *patience*, and the bestowing many mercies by goodness were not a natural revelation of the manner how he would be appeased: That was made known only by the *Prophets*, and after the coming of Christ by the *Apostles*; and had indeed been intelligible in some sort to the whole World, had there been a faithfulness in *Adams* posterity, to transmit the tradition of the first promise to succeeding Generations. Had not the knowledge of that dyed by their carelessness, and neglect, it had been easie to tell the reason of Gods *patience* to be in order to the exhibition of the *Seed of the woman, to bruise the Serpents head*.

They could not but naturally know themselves sinners, and worthy of death, they might by easie reflections upon themselves, collect that they were not in that comely and harmonious posture now, as they were, when God first wrought them with his own finger, and placed them as his Lieutenants in the World; they knew they did grievously offend him, this they were taught by the sprinklings of his judgments among them sometimes. And since he did not utterly root up mankind, his sparing *patience* was a prologue of some further favours, or pardoning Grace to be display'd to the World by some methods of God yet unknown to them. Though the Earth was something impair'd by the curse after the fall, yet the main pillars of it stood; the state of the natural motions of the Creature was not chang'd, the Heavens remain'd in the same posture, wherein they were Created, the Sun and Moon and other heavenly bodies continued their usefulness and refreshing influences to man. *The Heavens did still declare the Glory of God, day unto day did utter speech, their line is gone throughout all the Earth, and their words to the end of the World. Psal. 19. 1, 2, 3, 4.* Which declar'd God to be willing to do good to his Creatures, and were as so many legible letters or rudiments, whereby they might read his *patience*, and that a further design of favour to the World lay hid in that *Patience*. *Paul* applies this to the Preaching of the Gospel. *Rom. 10. 18. Have they not heard the word of God? yes verily their sound went into all the Earth, and their words unto the end of the World.* Redeeming grace could not be spell'd out by them in a clear notion, but yet they did declare that which is the Foundation of Gospel Mercy. Were not God *patient* there were no room for a Gospel Mercy, so that the Heavens declare the Gospel, *not formally* but *fundamentally* in declaring the *long-suffering* of God without which no Gospel had been fram'd, or could have been expected. They could not but read in those things favourable inclinations towards them. And though they could not be ignorant, that they deserved a mark of justice, yet seeing themselves supported by God, and beholding the regular motions of the Heavens from day to day, and the Revolutions of the seasons of the year, the natural conclusion they might draw from thence was, that God was *placable*: Since he behav'd himself more as a tender Friend, that had no mind to be at War with them, than an enraged Enemy. The good things which he gave them, and the *patience* whereby he spar'd them, were no arguments of an *implacable* disposition: And therefore of a disposition *willing to be appeased*. This is clearly the design of the *Apostles* arguing with the *Lystrians*, when they would have offered Sacrifices to *Paul*. *Acts 14. 17. When God suffered all Nations to walk in their own ways, he did not leave himself without witness, giving Rain from Heaven, and fruitful seasons.* What were those Witnesses of? Not only of the Being of a God, by their readiness to sacrifice to those that were not Gods, only supposed to be so in their false imaginations; but witnesses to the tenderness of God, that he had no mind to be severe with his Creatures: But would allure them by ways of Goodness.

\* Had not Gods *patience* tended to this end, to bring the World under another dispensation, the *Apostles* arguing from it had not been suitable to his design, which seems to be a hindering the sacrifices they intended for them, and a drawing them to embrace the Gospel, and therefore preparing the way to it, by speaking of the *Patience* and Goodness of God to them, as an unquestionable testimony of the *reconcilableness* of God to them, by some sacrifice which was represented

\* Amy. a. d.  
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under the common notion of Sacrifices. These things were not Witnesses of Christ, or syllables whereby they could spell out the redeeming person; but Witnesses that God was *placable* in his own nature. When man abused those noble faculties God had given him, and diverted them from the use and service God intended them for, God might have stript man of them, the first time that he mis-employed them; and it would have seemed most agreeable to his wisdom, and Justice, not to suffer himself to be abused, and the World to go contrary to its natural end. But since he did not level the World with its first nothing, but healed the World so favourably, it was evident, that his *patience* pointed the World to a further design of Mercy and Goodness in him. To imagine, that God had no other design in his long-suffering but that of vengeance, had been a notion unsuitable to the Goodness and Wisdom of God. He would never have pretended himself, to be a Friend, if he had harboured nothing but enmity in his heart against them.

It had been far from his Goodness, to give them a cause to suspect such a design in him, as his *patience* certainly did, had he not intended it. Had he preserv'd men only for punishment, 'tis more like, he would have treated men, as Princes do those they reserve for the Axe, or Halter, give them only things necessary, to uphold their lives till the day of Execution, and not have bestowed upon them so many good things, to make their lives delightful to them; nor have furnisht them with so many excellent means to please their senses and recreate their minds; it had been a mocking of them to treat them at that rate, if nothing but punishment had been intended towards them. If the end of it to lead men to *Repentance*, were easily intelligible by them, as the *Apostle* intimates. (*Rom. 2.4.* Which is to be linkt with the former chapter, a discourse of the Gentiles. Not knowing, saith he, *that the riches of his forbearance and goodness leads thee to repentance.*) it also gives them some ground to hope for pardon. For what other argument can more induce to Repentance than an expectation of Mercy upon a relenting, and acknowledging the crime. Without a design of pardoning Grace, his *patience* would have been in a great measure exercis'd in vain: For by meer *patience* God is not reconcil'd to a sinner, no more than a Prince to a Rebel by bearing with him. Nor can a sinner conclude himself in the favour of God, no more than a Rebel can conclude himself in the favour of his Prince; only this he may conclude, that there is some hopes, he may have the grant of a pardon, since he hath time to sue it out. And so much did the *patience* of God naturally signify, that he was of a reconcilable temper, and was willing men should sue out their pardon upon Repentance; otherwise, he might have magnified his Justice, and condemned men by the Law of Works.

2. He therefore exercised so much patience to wait for mens Repentance. All the notices and warnings that God gives men of either publick or personal calamities, is a continual invitation to Repentance. This was the common interpretation the Heathens made of extraordinary Prefages and Prodigies, which shew'd as well the delays as the approaches of Judgments. What other notion but this, that those warnings of Judgments witness a slowness to Anger, and a willingness to turn his arrows another way, should move them to multiply sacrifices, go weeping to their Temples, sound out prayers to their Gods, and shew all those other Testimonies of a Repentance, which their blind understandings hit upon. If a Prince should sometimes in a light and gentle manner punish a criminal, and then relax it, and shew him much kindness, and afterwards inflict upon him another kind of punishment as light as the former, and less than was due to his crime, what could the Malefactor suspect by such a way of proceeding, but that the Prince by those gently repeated chastisements, had a mind to move him to a regret for his crime? And what other thoughts could men naturally have of Gods conduct, that he should warn them of great judgments, send light afflictions, which are Testimonies rather of a *Patience*, than of a severe wrath, but that it was intended to move them to a relenting, and a breaking off their sins by work-

\* Amyraldus  
moral. Tom. 2.  
p. 186.



working Righteousness? Though *Divine patience* doth not in the event, induce men to Repentance, yet the natural tendency of such a treatment, is to mollify mens Hearts, to overcome their obstinacy, and no man hath any reason to judge otherwise of such a proceeding. The *long suffering of God is Salvation*, saith *Peter*. 2 *Pet.* 3. 15. i. e. hath a tendency to Salvation, in its being a sollicitation of men to the means of it: For the *Apostle* cites *Paul* for the confirmation of it, *Even as our beloved Brother Paul hath written unto you*, which must refer to *Rom.* 2. 4. *It leads to Repentance*, *As* it conducts, which is more than barely to invite, it doth as it were take us by the hand, and point us to the way wherein we should go, and for this end it was exercised not only towards the *Jews*, but towards the *Gentiles*, not only towards those that are within the pale of the Church, and under the dews of the Gospel, but to those that are in darkness, and in the shadow of death: For this discourse of the *Apostle* was but an inference from what he had treated of in the *first chapter* concerning the Idolatry and ingratitude of the *Gentiles*; since the *Gentiles* were to be punished for the abuse of it as well as the *Jews*, as he intimates. ver. 9. 'tis plain that his *patience* which is exercised towards the Idolatrous *Gentiles*, was to *allure them to Repentance* as well as others; and it was a sufficient motive in it self to persuade them to a change of their vile and gross acts, to such as were morally good. And there was enough in Gods dealing with them, and in that light they had to engage them to a better course, than what they usually walked in. And though men do abuse Gods *long-suffering*, to encourage their impenitence, and persisting in their crimes, yet that they cannot reasonably imagine that to be the end of God, is evident their own gripes of Conscience; would acquaint them, that it is otherwise. They know that Conscience is a principle that God hath given them as well as Understanding, and Will and other Faculties. That God doth not approve of that, which the voice of their *own Consciences*, and of the *Consciences of all men* under natural light, are utterly against. And if there were really in this *forbearance* of God an approbation of mens crimes, Conscience could not frequently and universally in all men check them for them. What Authority could Conscience have to do it? But this it doth in all men. As the *Apostle*. *Rom.* 1. 22. *They know the judgment of God, that those that do such things*, which he had mentioned before, *are worthy of death*. In this thing the Consciences of all men cannot err: They could not therefore conclude from hence Gods approbation of their iniquities, but his desire that their Hearts should be touched with a *Repentance* for them.

The *Sin of Ephraim is hid*. *Hosea* 13. 12. 13. i. e. God doth not presently take notice of it, to order punishment; he lays it in a secret place from the Eye of his Justice, that *Ephraim* might not be his unwise Son, and *stay long in the place of the breaking forth of Children*. i. e. That he should speedily reclaim himself and not continue in the way of destruction. God hath no need to abuse any, he doth not lie to the Sons of men, if he would have men perish, he could easily destroy them, and have done it long ago. He did not leave the woman *Jezabel* in being, nor lengthned out her time, but as a space to *Repent*. *Revelations* 2. 21. That she might reflect upon her ways, and devote her self seriously to his service, and her own happiness. His *patience* stands between the offending Creature and Eternal misery a long time, that men might not foolishly throw away their Souls, and be damned for their impenitency; by this he shews himself ready to receive men to mercy upon their return. To what purpose doth he invite men to *Repentance*, if he intended to deceive them, and damn them after they *Repent*?

3. *He doth exercise Patience for the propagation of Mankind*. If God punished every sin *presently*, there would not only be a period put to Churches, but to the World; without *Patience* *Adam* had sunk into Eternal anguish the first moment of his provocation; and the whole World of Mankind in his loynes, had perished with him, and never seen the light. If this perfection had not inter-

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posed,



posed after the first sin, God had lost his end in the Creation of the World, which he *Created not in vain, but formed it to be inhabited.* *Isa.* 45. 18. It had been inconsistent with the wisdom of God to make a world to be inhabited, and destroy it upon sin, when it had but two principal inhabitants in it; the reason of his making this earth had been insignificant; He had not had any upon earth to Glorify him, without erecting another World, which might have proved as sinful, and as quickly wicked as this; God should have alwayes been pulling down, and rearing up, creating and annihilating, one world would have come after another, as wave after wave in the Sea. His *Patience* stepped into support the honour of God, and the *continuance* of men, without which one had been in part impaired, and the other totally lost.

4. *He doth exercise Patience for the continuance of the Church.* If he be not *patient* toward sinners, what stock would there be for believers to spring up from? He bears with the provoking carriage of men, evil men; because out of their loynes he intends to extract others, which he will form for the glory of his grace. He hath some unborn, that belong to the *election of Grace*, which are to be the seed of the worst of men; *Jeroboam* the chief incendiary of the *Israelites* to Idolatry, had an *Abijah*, in whom was found *some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel.* *1 King.* 14. 13. Had *Abaz* been snapt in the first act of his wickedness, the *Israelites* had wanted so good a Prince, and so good a man as *Hezekiah*, a branch of that wicked predecessor. What Gardiner cuts off the thornes from the Rose-bush, till he hath gathered the Roses? And men do not use to burn all the Crab-tree, but preserve a Stock, to engraft some sweet fruit upon. There could not have been a Saint in the Earth, nor consequently in Heaven, had it not been for this perfection. He did not destroy the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, that he might keep up a Church among them, and not extinguish the whole seed that were heirs of the promises and Covenant made with *Abraham*. Had God punished men for their sins as soon as they had been committed, none would have lived to have been better, none could have continued in the World, to honour him by their virtues? *Manassah* had never been a convert, and many brutish men had never been changed from beasts to Angels, to praise, and acknowledge their Creator. Had *Peter* received his due recompence upon the denial of his Master, he had never been a Martyr for him; Nor had *Paul* been a Preacher of the Gospel, nor any else: and so the Gospel had not shined in any part of the world. No seed would have been brought into Christ, Christ is beholding immediately to this attribute, for all the seed he hath in the world; 'Tis for his *Name sake* that he doth *defer* his *Anger*, and for his *praise*, that he doth refrain from *cutting us off.* *Isa.* 48. 9. And in the next chapter follows a Prophecie of Christ. To overthrow Mankind for sin, were to prevent the spreading a Church in the world. A woman that is guilty of a Capital Crime, and lies under a condemning sentence, is reprieved from Execution, for her being with child. 'Tis for the Child's sake, the Woman is respited, not for her own; 'Tis for the *Elects sake* in the loynes of transgressors, that they are a *long time* spared, and not for their own. *Isa.* 65. 8, 9. *As the new Wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not for a blessing is in it; So will I do for my servants sake, that I may not destroy them all: as a Husband-man spares a Vine for some good clusters in it.* He had spoke of vengeance before, yet he would reserve some, from whom he would bring forth those, that should be *inheritors of his Mountains*: that he might make up his Church of *Judea*, *Jerusalem* being a Mountainous place, and the type of the Church in all Ages. What is the reason he doth not level his Thunder at the heads of those, for whose destruction he receives so many Petitions from the *Souls under the Altar*; *Rev.* 6. 9, 10. Because God had others to write a Testimony for him in their own blood, and perhaps out of the loynes of those for whom vengeance was so earnestly supplicated; \* And God, as the Master of a Vessel, lies *Patiently* at Anchor, till the last Passenger he expects, be taken in.

\* Smith on the  
Creed, p. 404.

5. *For the sake of his Church he is Patient to wicked men.* The tares are *Patiently*,



ently endured till the Harvest, for fear in the plucking up the one, there might be some prejudice done to the other. Upon this account he spares some, who are worse than others, whom he crusheth by signal judgments; The *Jews* had committed sins worse than *Sodom*, for the confirmation of which we have God's Oath, *Ezek.* 16. 48. and more by half than *Samaria*, or the Ten Tribes had done; *Jer.* 51. Yet God spared the *Jews*, though he destroyed the *Sodomites*. What was the reason, but a larger remnant of Righteous persons, more clusters of good grapes were found among them, than grew in *Sodom*. *Isa.* 1. 9. A few more Righteous in *Sodom* had damp't the Fire and Brimstone design'd for that place; And a remnant of such in *Judea* was a bar to that fierceness of anger, which otherwise would have quickly consumed them. Had there been but Ten Righteous in *Sodom*, Divine Patience had still bound the Arms of justice, that it should not have prepared its Brimstone, notwithstanding the clamour of the sins of the multitude. *Judea* was ripe for the sickle, but God would put a lock upon the torrent of his judgments, that they should not flow down upon that wicked place, to make them a desolation and a curse, as long as tender hearted *Josiah* lived, who had humbled himself at the threatening, and wept before the Lord; *1 King.* 22. 19, 20. Sometimes he bears with wicked men, that they might exercise the Patience of the Saints. *Rev.* 14. 12. The whole time of the forbearance of Antichrist in all his intrusions into the Temple of God, invasions of the rights of God, usurpations of the Office of Christ, and besmearing himself with the blood of the Saints, was to give them an opportunity of Patience. God is Patient towards the wicked, that by their means he might try the Righteous. He burns not the wisp, till he hath scowred his vessels; Nor layes by the hammer, till he hath formed some of his matter into an excellent fashion. He useth the worst men as rods to correct his people, before he sweeps the twigs out of his house. God sometimes uses the thorns of the World, as a hedge to secure his Church, sometimes as instruments to try, and exercise it. Howsoever he useth them, whither for security or tryal, he is Patient to them for his Churches advantage.

6. When men are not brought to Repentance by his Patience, he doth longer exercise it, to manifest the equity of his future justice upon them. As Wisdom is justified by her obedient children, so is justice justified by the rebels against Patience, the contempt of the later is the justification of the former. The Apostles were unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that perish, as well as in them that were saved by the acceptation of their message. *2 Cor.* 2. 15. Both are fragrant to God, his Mercy is Glorified by the ones acceptance of it, and his Justice freed from any charge against it by the others refusal. The cause of mens ruin cannot be laid upon God, who provided means for their Salvation, and solicited their compliance with him. What reason can they have to charge the Judge with any wrong to them, who reject the tenders he makes, and who hath forborn them with so much Patience, when he might have censured them by his Righteous Justice, upon the first crime they committed, or the first refusal of his gracious offers? *Quanto Dei magis Judicium tardum est tanto magis justum.* \* After the despising of Patience, there can be no suspicion of an irregularity in the acts of Justice. Man hath no reason to fall foul in his charge upon God, if he were punished for his own sin, considering the dignity of the injured person, and the meanness of himself the offender; But his wrath is more justified, when it is poured out upon those whom he hath endured with much long suffering. There is no plea against the shooting of his Arrows into those, for whom this voice hath been loud, and his arms open for their return. As Patience while it is exercised, is the silence of his justice, so when it is abused, it silenceth mens complaints against his justice. The riches of his forbearance made way for the manifesting the treasures of his wrath. If God did but a little bear with the insolencies of men, and cut them off after two or three sins, he would not have opportunity to shew either the power of his Patience, or that of his wrath; But when he hath a right to punish for one sin, and yet bears with them for many, and they will not be reclaimed, the sinner is more inexecutable, divine Justice less chargable, and his wrath more powerful; *Rom.* 9.

\* Minuc Felix pag. 41.



22. What if God willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction? The proper and immediate end of his long suffering, is to lead men to repentance, but after they have by their obstinacy, fitted themselves for destruction, he bears longer with them, to magnifie his wrath more upon them, and if it is not the *finis operantis*, 'tis at least the *finis operis*, where *Patience* is abused. Men are apt to complain of God, that he deals hardly with them; The *Israelites* seem to charge God with too much severity, to cast them off, when so many promises were made to the fathers for their perpetuity and preservation, which is intimated; *Hof. 2. 2. Plead with your mother, plead*; by the double repetition of the word *plead*; Do not accuse me of being false, or too rigorous, but accuse your Mother, your Church, your Magistracy, your Ministry, for their spiritual fornications which have provoked me; For their *וְעַתָּה* intimating the greatness of their sins by the reduplication of the word; *lest I strip her naked*. I have born with her under many provocations, and I have not yet taken away all her Ornaments, or said to her according to the rule of divorce, *res tuas tibi habeto*. God answers their impudent charge, *She is not my Wife, nor am I her Husband*; He doth not say first, I am not her Husband, but she is not my Wife; *She first* withdrew from her duty, by breaking the Marriage Covenant, and then I ceased to be her Husband. No man shall be condemned, but he shall be convinced of the due desert of his sin, and the justice of God's proceeding. God will lay open Mens guilt, and repeat the measures of his *Patience*, to justify the severity of his wrath, *Hof. 7. 10. Sins will testify to their face*. What is in its own nature a preparation for Glory, men by their obstinacy make a preparation for a more indisputable punishment. We see many evidences of God's forbearance here, in sparing men under those blasphemies which are audible, and those prophane carriages which are visible, which would sufficiently justify an act of severity; Yet when mens secret sins both in heart and action, and the vast multitude of them, far surmounting what can arrive to our knowledge here, shall be discovered, how great a lustre will it add, to God's bearing with them, and make his justice triumph without any reasonable demurr from the sinner himself! He is long suffering here, that his justice may be more publick hereafter.

#### IV. The U S E.

##### I. For Instruction.

1. How is this *Patience* of God abused! The *Gentiles* abused those Testimonies of it, which were written in showers, and fruitful seasons. No Nation was ever stript of it, under the most provoking Idolatries till after multiplyed spurns at it. Not a person among us but hath been guilty of the abuse of it. How have we contemned that which demands a reverence from us? How have we requited God's waitings with rebellions, while he hath continued urging and expecting our return? *Saul* relented at *David's* forbearing to revenge himself, when he had his prosecuting and industrious enemy in his power. *1 Sam. 24. 17. Thou art more Righteous than I, thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil*. And shall we not relent at God's wonderful long suffering, and silencing his anger so much? He could puff away our lives, but he will not, and yet we endeavour to strip him of his being, though we cannot.

##### 1. Let us consider the wayes, how slowness to anger is abused.

1. 'Tis abused by mis-interpretations of it, when men slander his *Patience*, to be only a carelessness, and neglect of his providence; As *Averroes* argued from his slowness to anger, a total neglect of the Government of the lower World. Or when men from his long suffering charge him with impurity, as if his *Patience* were a consent to their crimes; and because he suffered them, without calling them to account, he were one of their partisans, and as wicked as themselves, *Psal. 50. 21. Because I kept silence, thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thy self*. His silence makes them conclude him to be an abetter of, and a consort in their sins; And



And think him more pleased with their iniquity, than their obedience. Or when they will inferre from his *forbearance* a want of his Omniscience: Because he suffers their sins, they imagine he forgets them. *Psal. 10. 11. He hath said in his Heart, God hath forgotten.* Thinking his *patience* proceeds not from the sweetness of his nature, but a weakness of his mind. How base is it instead of admiring him, to disparage him for it; and because he stands in so advantageous a posture towards us, not to own the choicest prerogatives of his Deity? This is to make a perfection so useful to us, to shadow, and extinguish those others, which are the prime flowers of his Crown.

2. *His Patience is abused, by continuing in a course of Sin under the influences of it.* How much is it the practical language of men, Come let us commit this, or that iniquity; since *Divine patience* hath suffered worse than this at our hands? Nothing is remitted to their sensual pleasures and eagerness in them. How often did the *Israelites* repeat their murmurings against him, as if they would put his *patience* to the utmost proof, and see how far the line of it could extend? They were no sooner satisfied in one thing, but they quarrelled with him about another, as if he had no other attribute to put in motion against them. They tempted him, as often as he relieved them, as though the declaration of his name to *Moses*, 34 of *Exod. To be a God gracious, and Long-suffering*, had been intended for no other purpose but a protection of them in their Rebellions. Such a sort of men the *Prophet* speaks of, that were *setled in their Lees*, or dregs. *Zeph. 1. 12.* They were congeal'd, and frozen in their successful wickedness; such an abuse of *Divine patience* is the very dreggs of sin; God chargeth it highly upon the *Jews. Isaiah 57. 11. I have held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not, my silence made thee confident yea impudent in thy sin.*

3. *His patience is abused, by repeating sin, after God hath, by an act of his patience, taken off some affliction from men.* As mettals melted in the fire remain fluid under the operations of the flames, yet when removed from the Fire, they quickly return to their former hardness, and sometimes grow harder, than they were before. So men who in their afflictions seem to be melted, like *Ahab* confess their sins, lye prostrate before God, and seek him early, yet if they be brought from under the power of their afflictions, they return to their old nature, and are as stiff against God, and resist the blows of the Spirit, as much as they did before. They think they have a new stock of patience, to sin upon. *Pharaoh* was somewhat thaw'd under judgments, and frozen again under *forbearance*, *Exod. 9. 27. 34.* Many will howl when God strikes them, and laugh at him when he *forbears* them. This that *patience* which should melt us, doth often hard'n us, which is not an effect natural to his patience, but natural to our abusing corruption.

4. *His patience is abus'd, by taking encouragement from it to mount to greater degrees of Sin.* Because God is *slow to Anger*, men are more fierce in sin, and not only continue in their old Rebellions, but heap new upon them. If he spare them for three transgressions they will commit four, as is intimated in the *first and second of Amos*; *Mens hearts are fully set in them to do evil, because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed. Eccles. 8. 11.* Their Hearts are more desperately bent; before they had some waverings, and pull-backs, but after a fair Sun-shine of *Divine patience*, they entertain more unbridled resolutions, and pass forward with more liberty and licentiousness. They make his *long-suffering* subservient to turn out all those little relentings, and regrets they had before, and banish all thoughts of barring out a Temptation. No encouragement is given to men by *God's patience*, but they force it by their presumption. They invert *God's order*, and bind themselves stronger to iniquity by that which should bind them faster to their duty. A happy escape at Sea makes men go more confidently into the deeps afterward. Thus we deal with God, as Debtors do with good natur'd Creditors: Because they do not dunn them for what they owe, they take encouragement to run more upon the score, till the summe amounts above their ability of payment.

But



But let it be considered.

1. *That this abuse of patience is a high Sin.* As every act of forbearance obligeth us to duty, so every act of it, abused, encreaseth our guilt. The more frequent its solicitations of us have been, the deeper aggravations our sin receives by it. Every sin, after an act of *decine patience*, contracts a blacker guilt. The sparing us after the last sin we committed was a superadded act of *long-suffering*, and a laying out more of his riches upon us: And therefore every new act committed, is a despite against greater riches expended, and greater cost upon us, and against his preserving us from the hand of Justice for the last transgression. 'Tis disingenuous not to have a due resentment of so much Goodness, and base to injure him the more, because he doth not right himself. Shall he receive the more wrongs from us, by how much the sweeter he is to us? No mans Conscience but will tell him, 'tis vile to preferre the satisfaction of a sordid Lust, before the Counsel of a God of so gracious a disposition. The sweeter the nature, the fouler is the injury, that is done unto it.

2. *'Tis dangerous to abuse his patience.* Contempt of kindness is most irksome to an ingenuous spirit, and he is worthy to have the arrows of Gods indignation lodg'd in his heart, who despiseth the *Riches of his long-suffering*. For,

1. *The time of patience will have an end.* Though his Spirit strives with man, yet it shall *not always strive*. Gen. 6. 3. Though there be a time wherein *Jerusalem* might know the things, that concerned her peace, yet there is another period wherein they should be *hid from her Eyes*. Luke 19. 43. *Oh that thou hadst known in this thy day?* Nations have their day, and persons have their day, and the day of most persons is shorter than the day of Nations. *Jerusalem* had her day of *forty years*, but how many particular persons were taken off, before the last or middle hours of that day were arriv'd? *Forty years* was God griev'd with the Generation of the *Israelites*. Heb. 3. 11. One Carcass dropt after another in that limited time, and at the end not a man but fell under the judicial stroke, except *Caleb* and *Joshua*. *One hundred and twenty years* was the Term set to the mass of the old World, but not to *every man* in the old World; some fell while the *Ark* was preparing, as well as the whole stock, when the *Ark* was compleated. Though he be *patient* with most, yet he is not in the same degree with all; every sinner hath his time of sinning, beyond which he shall proceed no further, be his lusts never so impetuous, and his affections never so imperious. The *time of his patience* is in Scripture set forth sometimes by *years*; *three years* he came to find fruit on the Fig-tree; sometimes by *days*, some mens sins are sooner ripe, and fall. There is a *measure of sin*, Jer. 51. 13. Which is set forth by the *Ephah*, *Zach.* 5. 8. Which when it is fill'd, is *seal'd up*, and a weight of lead cast upon the mouth of it. When judgments are preparing, once and twice the Lord is prevail'd with by the intercession of the Prophet. The prepar'd *Grasshoppers* are not sent to devour, and the *kindl'd Fire* is not blown up to consume. Amos 7. from ver. 1. to ver. 8. But at last God takes the *plumb-line* to sute, and measure punishment to their sin, and would not pass by them any more, and when their sin was ripe, represented by a *basket of Summer fruit*, God would withhold his hand no longer, but brought such a day upon them, wherein *the Songs of the Temple should be howlings*, and *dead bodies be in every place*. Amos 8. 2. 3. He lays by any further thoughts of *patience* to speed their ruine. God had born long with the *Israelites*, and long it was before he gave them up. He would first break the *bow in Jezreel*, Hos. 1. 5. take away the strength of the Nation by the death of *Zachariah*, the last of *Jehus* race, which introduc'd civil dissensions and ambitious Murders, for the Throne, whereby in weakning one part, they weakned the whole; or as some think, alluding to *Tiglah Pilezar*, who carried Captive two Tribes and a half. If this would not reclaim them, then follow's *Lorulahmah*, *I will not have Mercy*, I will sweep them out of the Land, verse 6. If they did not Repent they should be *Loammi*. verse 9. *You are not my people*, and *I will not be your God*, They should be discovenanted, and stript of all federal relation.

Here



Here *patience* for ever withdrew from them, and wrathful anger took its place. And for particular persons, the time of life, whither shorter or longer, is the only time of *long-suffering*. It hath no other stage, than the present state of things to act upon. There is none else to be expected after, but giving account of what hath been done in the Body, not of any thing done after the Soul is fled from the body. The *time of patience* ends with the first moment of the Souls departure from the Body. This time only is the *day of Salvation*, i. e. The day wherein God offers it, and the day wherein God waits for our acceptance of it. 'Tis at his pleasure to shorten, or lengthen our day, not at ours. 'Tis not our long suffering, but his, he hath the command of it.

2. *God hath wrath to punish, as well as patience to bear.* He hath a fury to revenge the outrages done to his meekness; when his Messages of peace sent to reclaim men are slighted, his Sword shall be whetted, and his instruments of War prepar'd. *Hos. 5. 8. 'Blow ye the Cornet in Gibeah, and the Trumpet in Ramah.* As he deals gently like a Father, so he can punish capitally as a Judge. Though he holds his peace for a long time, yet at last he will go forth like a mighty man; and stir up jealousy as a man of War to cut in pieces his Enemies. 'Tis not said, he hath no anger, but that he is *slow to anger*, but sharp in it. He hath a *Sword* to cut, and a *Bow* to shoot, and *Arrows* to pierce. *Psal. 12. 13.* Though be be long a drawing the one out of its Scabbard, and long a fitting the other to his Bow, yet when they are ready, he strikes home, and hits the mark. Though he hath a *time of patience*, yet he hath also a *day of rebuke*. *Hos. 5. 9.* Though *patience* over-rules Justice by suspending it, yet Justice will at last over-rule *patience* by an utter silencing it. God is Judge of the whole Earth to right men, yet he is no less Judge, of the injuries he receives to right himself. Though God a while was pressed with the murmurings of the *Israelites*, after their coming out of *Egypt*, and seemed desirous to give them all satisfaction upon their unworthy complaints, yet when they came to open hostility, in setting a *Golden Calf* in his Throne, he commissions the *Levites*, to kill every man his *Brother, and companion in the Camp*. *Exod. 32. 27.* And how desirous soever he was to content them before, they never murmured afterwards, but they severely smarted for it. When once he hath begun to use his Sword, he sticks it up naked, that it might be ready for use upon every occasion. Though he hath feet of Lead, yet he hath hands of Iron. It was long that he supported the peevishness of the *Jews*, but at last he captiv'd them by the arms of the *Babylonians*, and laid them wast by the power of the *Romans*. He planted by the *Apostles* Churches in the East, and when his Goodness and *Long-suffering* prevail'd not with them, he tore them up by the roots. What Christians are to be found in those once famous parts of *Asia*, but what are overgrown with much error and ignorance?

3. *The more his patience is abus'd, the sharper will be the wrath he inflicts.* As his wrath restrained, makes his *patience* long, so his compassions restrained, will make his *wrath* severe. As he doth transcend all Creatures in the measures of the one, so he transcends all Creatures in the sharpness of the other. Christ is describ'd with feet of brass, as if they burn'd in a Furnace. *Revel. 1. 15.* slow to move, but heavy to crush, and hot to burn. His wrath looseth nothing by delay; it grows the fresher by sleeping, and strikes with greater strength when it awakes. All the time men are abusing his *patience*, God is whetting his Sword, and the longer it is whetting, the sharper will be the edge. The longer he is fetching his blow, the smarter it will be. The heavier the Canons are, the more difficultly are they drawn to the besieged Town, but when arriv'd they recompence the slowness of their march by the fierceness of their battery. *'Because I have purged thee, i. e. used means for thy reformation, and waited for it, and thou wast not purg'd, thou shalt not be purg'd from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. I will not go back, neither will I spare, according to thy ways, and according to thy doings shall they Judge thee. Ezek. 24. 13. 14.* God will spare as little then, as he spar'd much before. His *wrath* shall be as raging upon them, as the Sea of their

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wickedness was within them. When there is a bank to forbid the irruption of the streams, the waters swell, but when the bank is broke, or the lock taken away, they rush with the greater violence, and ravage more, than they would have done, had not they met with a stop. The longer a stone is in falling, the more it bruises, and grinds to powder. There is a greater treasure of Wrath laid up by the *abuses of patience*. Every sin must have a just recompence of reward; and therefore every sin in regard of its aggravations must be more punished, than a sin in the singleness and simplicity of its own nature. As treasures of mercy are kept by God for us, *he keeps mercy for thousands*, so are treasures of wrath kept by him, to be expended; and a time of expence there must be, *Patience* will account to Justice, all the good offices it hath done the sinner, and demand to be righted by Justice. Justice will take the account from the hands of *Patience*, and exact a recompence for every disingenuous injury offered to it. When Justice comes to arrest men for their debts, *Patience*, Mercy, and Goodness will step in as Creditors, and clap their actions upon them, which will make the condition so much more deplorable.

4. *When he puts an end to his abus'd patience, his wrath will make quick, and sure work.* He that is *slow to Anger* will be *swift* in the execution of it. The departure of God from *Jerusalem*, is described with *wings* and *wheels*. *Ezek. 11. 23.* One stroke of his hand is irresistible, he that hath spent so much time in waiting, needs but one minute to ruine; though it be long ere he draws his Sword out of his scabbard, yet when once he doth it, he dispatcheth men at a blow. *Ephraim* or the *Ten Tribes*, had a long time of *patience*, and prosperity, but now shall a month devour him with his portion. *Hosea 5. 7.* One fatal month puts a period to the many years peace, and security of a sinful Nation. His Arrows wound suddenly. *Psal. 64. 7.* And while men are about to fill their Bellies, he casts the fruits of his wrath upon them. *Job 20. 23.* Like thunder out of a Cloud, or a Bullet out of a Cannon that strikes dead, before it is heard. God deals with sinners, as Enemies do with a Town, batter it not by planted Guns, but secretly undermines, and blows up the Walls, whereby they involve the Garrison in a suddain ruine, and carry the Town. God spar'd the *Amalekites* along time after the injury committed against the *Israelites* in their passage out of *Egypt* to *Canaan*, but when he came to reckon with them, he would waite them in a trice, and make an utter consumption of them. *1 Sam. 15. 2, 3.* He describes himself by a travelling Woman. *Isaiah 42. 14.* That hath born long in her Womb, and at last sends forth her Birth with strong cries. Though he hath held his peace, been still and refrained himself, yet at last, he will destroy, and devour at once. The *Ninivites* spar'd in the time of *Jonah* for their Repentance, are in Nature threatened with a certain and total ruine; when God should come, to bring them to an account for his length and patience, so much abus'd by them. Though God endur'd the murmuring *Israelites* so long in the Wilderness, yet he paid them off at last, and took away the Rebels in his Wrath. He uttered their sentence with an irreversible Oath, that none of them should enter into his rest, and he did as surely execute it, as he had solemnly sworn it.

5. *Though he doth deferre his visible wrath, yet that very delay may be more dreadful than a quick punishment.* He may forbear striking, and give the Reins to the hardness and corruption of mens hearts. He may suffer them, to walk in their own Counsels, without any more striving with them, whereby they make themselves fitter fuel for his vengeance. This was the fate of *Israel*, when they would not hearken to his voice, he gave them up to their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own Counsels, *Psal. 81. 12.* Though his sparing them, had the outward aspect of *patience*, it was a wrathful one, and attended with spiritual judgments, thus many abusers of *patience* may still have their line lengthned, and the Candle of prosperity to shine upon their heads, that they may encrease their sins, and be the fitter mark at last for his arrows. They swim down the stream of their own sensuality with a deplorable security, till they fall into an unavoidable



able gulf, where at last it will be a great part of their Hell, to reflect on the length of *divine patience* on Earth, and their inexcusable abuse of it.

2. *It informs us of the reason, why he lets the Enemies of his Church oppress it, and delays his promise of the deliverance of it.* If he did punish them presently, his holiness and Justice would be glorified, but his power over himself in his *patience* would be obscured. Well may the Church be content, to have a perfection of God glorified, that is not like to receive any honor in another World by any exercise of it self. If it were not for this *patience*, he were incapable to be the Governour of a sinful World; he might without it be the Governour of an innocent World, but not of a criminal one; he would be the destroyer of the World, but not the orderer and disposer of the extravagancies, and sinfulness of the World. The interest of his Wisdom in drawing good out of evil, would not be served, if he were not clothed with this perfection as well as with others. If he did presently destroy the Enemies of his Church upon the first oppression, his wisdom in contriving, and his power in accomplishing deliverance against the united powers of Hell and Earth, would not be visible, no nor that power in preserving his people unconsumed in the furnace of Affliction. He had not got so great a name in the rescue of his *Israel* from *Pharaoh*, had he thundered the Tyrant into destruction upon his first Edicts against the innocent. If he were not *patient* to the most violent of men, he might seem to be cruel. But when he offers peace to them under their rebellions, waits that they may be members of his Church, rather than Enemies to it; he frees himself from any such imputation, even in the judgment of those that shall feel most of his wrath; 'tis this renders the equity of his Justice unquestionable, and the deliverance of his people righteous in the Judgment of those from whose fetters they are delivered. *Christ Reigns in the midst of his Enemies*, to shew his power over himself, as well as over the heads of his Enemies, to shew his power over his Rebels. And though he retards his promise, and suffers a great interval of time between the publication and performance, sometimes *years*, sometimes *ages* to pass away, and little appearance of any preparation, to shew himself a God of Truth; 'Tis not that he hath forgotten his Word, or repents, that ever he passed it, or sleeps in a supine neglect of it: but that men might not perish, but bethink themselves, and come as friends into his bosom rather than be crush'd as enemies under his feet. 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance.* Hereby he shews, that he would be rather pleas'd with the conversion, than the destruction of men.

3. *We see the reason, why sin is suffered to remain in the Regenerate;* To shew his *Patience* towards his own; for since this attribute hath no other place of appearance but in this World, God takes opportunity to manifest it: because at the close of the World, it will remain closed up in the Deity, without any further operation. As God suffers a multitude of sins in the World, to evidence his *Patience* to the wicked, so he suffers great remainders of sin in his people, to shew his *Patience* to the Godly. His sparing mercy is admirable, before their conversion, but more admirable in bearing with them after so high an Obligation, as the conferring upon them special converting Grace.

2. *The second Use is of comfort.* 'Tis a vast comfort to any, when God is pacified towards them; but it is some comfort to all, that God is yet *Patient* towards them, though but very little to a refractory sinner. His *continued Patience* to all, speaks a possibility of the cure of all, would they not stand against the way of their recovery. 'Tis a terror, that God hath anger, but it is a mitigation of that terror, that God is *slow* to it; While his Sword is in his sheath, there is some hopes to prevent the drawing of it; Alas, if he were all fire and sword upon sin, what would become of us? We should find nothing else but over-flowing deluges, or sweeping Pestilences, or perpetual flashes of *Sodom's* Fire and Brimstone from Heaven. He doomes us not presently to execution,



but gives us a long breathing time after the crime, that by retiring from our iniquities, and having recourse to his mercy, he may be with-held for ever from signing a Warrant against us, and change his Legal Sentence into an Evangelical pardon. 'Tis a special *comfort* to his people, that he is a *Sanctuary to them*. Ezek. 11. 16. A place of refuge, a place of Spiritual Communications; But it is some refreshment to all in this life, that he is a defence to them: for so is his *Patience* call'd. Numb. 14. 9. *Their defence is departed from them*; Speaking to the *Israelites*, that they should not be afraid of the *Canaanites*, for their *defence* is departed from them. God is no longer *Patient* to them, since their sins be full and ripe. *Patience* as long as it lasts, is a temporary defence, to those that are under the wing of it; but to the believer it is a singular *comfort*; And God is called the *God of Patience and consolation* in one breath. Rom. 15. 5. *The God of Patience and Consolation grant you to be like-minded*; All interpreters understand it effectually. The God that inspires you with *comfort*, and cheares you with *comfort*, grant this to you. Why may it not be understood *formally*, of the *Patience* belonging to the nature of God? and though it be exprest in the way of Petition, yet it might also be proposed as a pattern for imitation, and so suits very well to the Exhortation laid down, ver. 1. which was to *bear with the infirmities of the weak*, which he preleth them to, ver. 3. *by the example of Christ*; And ver. 5. *by the Patience of God to them*, and so they are very well linkt together. God of *Patience and Consolation* may well be joyned, since *Patience* is the first step of *comfort* to the poor creature. If it did not administer some comfortable hopes to *Adam*, in the interval between his fall, and God's coming to examine him; I am sure it was the first discovery of any comfort to the creature, after the sweeping the destroying deluge out of the World; Gen. 9. 21. After the *jacour of Noah's Sacrifice*, representing the great Sacrifice which was to be in the World, had ascended up to God, the return from him is a publication of his *forbearing to punish* any more in such a manner: And though he found man no better than he was before, and the imaginations of mens hearts as evil as before the deluge, that he would not again smite every living thing, as he had done. This was the first expression of *comfort* to *Noah*, after his exit from the Ark; And declares nothing else but the *continuance of Patience* to the New World, above what he had shewn to the Old.

1. 'Tis a *comfort*, in that 'tis an argument of his Grace to his people. If he hath so rich a *Patience* to exercise towards his enemies, he hath a greater treasure to bestow upon his friends. *Patience* is the first Attribute, which steps in for our Salvation, and therefore called *Salvation*. 2 Pet. 3. 15. Something else is therefore built upon it, and intended by it, to those that believe. Those two letters of his name, a God keeping *Mercy for Thousands*, and *forgiving iniquity, transgressions and sin*, follows the other Letter of his *long suffering* in the Proclamation. Exod. 34. 6, 7. He is *slow to anger*, that he may be merciful, that men may seek, and receive their pardon. If he be *long suffering*, in order to be a pardoning God, he will not be wanting in pardoning those who answer the design of his forbearance of them. You would not have had sparing mercy to improve, if God would have deny'd you saving mercy upon the improvement of his sparing goodness. If he hath so much respect to his enemies, that provoke him, as to endure them with much *long suffering*, he will surely be very kind to those that obey him, and conform to his will. If he hath *much long suffering* to those that are *fitted for destruction*, Rom. 9. 22. he will have a *muchness of mercy* for those that are prepared for Glory by Faith and Repentance. 'Tis but a natural conclusion a gracious Soul may make, if God had not a mind to be appeased towards me, he would not have had a mind to *forbear* me; but since he hath *forborn* me, and given me a heart to see, and answer the true end of that forbearance, I need not question, but that *sparing Mercy* will end in *saving*, since it finds that Repentance springing up in me, which that *Patience* conducted me to.



2. *His Patience is a ground to trust in his promise.* If his *slowness to anger* be so great, when his Precept is slighted, his readiness to give what he hath promised, will be as great, when his promise is believed. If the provocations of them meet with such an unwillingness to punish them, Faith in him will meet with the choicest embraces from him. He was more ready to make the promise of Redemption after man's Apostacy, than to execute the threatening of the Law. He doth still witness a greater willingness to give forth the fruits of the promise, than to pour out the vials of his curses. His slowness to anger is an evidence still, that he hath the same disposition, which is no slight Cordial to Faith in his Word.

3. *'Tis a comfort in infirmities.* If he were not *patient*, he could not bear with so many peevishnesses, and weaknesses in the hearts of his own. If he be *patient* to the grosser sins of his enemies, he will be no less to the lighter infirmities of his people. When the Soul is as a bruised Reed, that can emit no sound at all, or one very harsh and ungrateful, he doth not break it in pieces, and sling it away in disdain, but waits to see, whether it will fully answer his pains, and be brought to a better frame, and sweeter note. He brings them not to account for every slip, but *as a Father spares his son that serves him.* Mal. 3. 17. 'Tis a comfort to us in our distracted services; for were it not for this slowness to anger, he would still us in the midst of our Prayers, wherein there are as many foolish thoughts to disgust him, as there are petitions to implore him. The *Patience of Angels* would hardly be able to bear with the follies of good men in Acts of worship.

3. *The Third Use is for Exhortation.*

1. *Meditate often on the patience of God.* The Devil labours for nothing more, than to deface in us the consideration and memory of this perfection. He is an envious creature, and since it hath reached out itself to us, and not to him, he envies God the Glory of it, and man the advantage of it. But God loves to have the Volumes of it studied, and daily turn'd over by us. We cannot without an inexcusable wilfulness miss the thoughts of it, since it is visible in every bit of bread, and breath of Air in our selves, and all about us.

1. *The frequent consideration of his patience, would render God highly amiable to us.* 'Tis a more endearing argument, than his meer goodness; His goodness to us as creatures, endowing us with such excellent faculties, furnishing us with such a commodious World, and bestowing upon us so many attendants for our pleasure and service, and giving us a Lordship over his other works, deserves our affection. But his *patience* to us as sinners after we have merited the greatest wrath, shews him to be of a sweeter disposition, than creating Goodness to unoffending Creatures; and consequently speaks a greater love in *him*, and bespeaks a greater affection from us. His Creating goodness discovered the Majesty of his Being, and the greatness of his mind, but this the sweetness and tenderness of his Nature. In this *patience* he exceeds the mildness of all Creatures to us; and therefore should be enthroned in our affections above all other Creatures. The consideration of this would make us affect him for his nature, as well as for his benefits.

2. *The consideration of his patience, would make us frequent and serious in the exercise of Repentance.* In its nature it leads to it, and the consideration of it would engage us to it, and melt us in the exercise of it. Could we deeply think of it, without being touched with a sense of the kindness of our forbearing Creditor and Governour? Could we gaze upon it? nay could we glance upon it without relenting at our offending one of so mild a nature, without being sensibly affected, that he hath preserved us so long from being loaded with those chains of darkness, under which the Devils groan? This *forbearance* hath good reason to make sin, and sinners ashamed. That you are in being, is not for want of advantages enough in his hand against you, many a forfeiture you have made, and many an engagement you have broke; he hath scarce met with any other dealing from us, than what had treachery in it. Whatsoever our sincerity is, we have no reason



reason to boast of it, when we consider, what mixtures there are in it, and what swarms of base motions taint it. Hath he not lain pressed and groaning under our sins, as a *Cart is pressed with sheaves*. *Amos 2. 12.* when one shake of himself as *Sampson*, might have rid him of the burthen, and dismissed us in his fury into Hell? If we should often ask our Consciences, why have we done thus, and thus against so mild a God? Would not the reflection on it, put us to the blush? If men would consider, that such a time they provoked God to his face, and yet have not felt his Sword; such a time they blasphemed him, and made a reproach of his name, and his thunder did not stop their motion; such a time they fell into an abominable brutishness, yet he kept the punishment of Devils, the unclean Spirits from reaching them; such a time he bore an open affront from them, when they scoff at his Word, and he did not send a destruction, and laugh at it. Would not such a meditation work some strange kind of relentings in men? What if we should consider, that we cannot do a sinful act without the support of his concurring Providence? We cannot see, hear, move without his concurrence. All Creatures we use for our necessity, or pleasure, are supported by him in the very act of assisting, to pleasure us; and when we abuse those Creatures against him, which he supports for our use, how great is his *patience* to bear with us, that he doth not annihilate those Creatures, or at least embitter their use? What issue could reasonably be expected, from this consideration, but *Oh wretched man that I am, to serve my self of Gods power, to affront him, and of his Long-suffering to abuse him? Oh infinite patience to employ that power to preserve me, that might have been used to punish me!* He is my Creator, I could not have a being without him, and yet I offend him. He is my preserver, I cannot maintain my being without him, and yet I affront him. Is this a worthy requital of God? *Deut. 32. 6. Do you thus requite the Lord*, would be the heart breaking reflection. How would it give men a fuller prospect of the depravation of their nature, than any thing else; that their corruption should be so deep and strong, that so much *patience* could not overcome it? It would certainly make a man ashamed of his nature as well as his actions.

3. *The consideration of his patience, would make us resent more, the injuries done by others to God.* A *Patient sufferer*, though a deserving sufferer, attracts the pity of men, that have a value for any virtue, though clouded with a heap of vice. How much more should we have a concern for God, who suffers so many abuses from others? And be grieved, that so admirable a *patience* should be slighted by men, who solely live by, and under the daily influence of it? The impression of this would make us take Gods part, as it is usual with men, to take the part of good dispositions that lie under oppression.

4. *It would make us patient under Gods hand.* His *slowness to Anger* and his *forbearance* is visible, in the very strokes we feel in this Life. We have no reason to murmur against him, who gives us so little cause, and in the greatest afflictions gives us more occasion of thankfulness, than of repining. Did not slowness to the extreamest Anger, moderate every affliction, it had been a Scorpion instead of a rod. We have reason to bless him, who from his *long-suffering* sends temporal sufferings, where eternal are justly due. *Ezra 9. 13. Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities do deserve.* His indulgences towards us have been more than our corrections, and the length of his *patience* hath exceeded the sharpness of his rod. Upon the account of his *long-suffering* our mutinies against God have as little to excuse them, as our sins against him have to deserve his forbearance.

The consideration of this would shew us more reason, to repine at our own repinings, than at any of his smarter dealings. And the consideration of this would make us submissive, under the Judgments we expect. His *undeserved patience* hath been more than our merited judgments can possibly be thought to be. If we fear the removal of the Gospel for a season, as we have reason to do, we should rather bless him, that by his waiting *patience*, he hath continued it so long,

than



then murmur, that he threatens to take it away so late. He hath born with us many a year, since the light of it was re-kindled, when our Ancestors had but *six years of patience* between the rise of *Edward the VI*, and the ascent of *Queen Mary* to the Crown.

2. *Exhortation is, to admire and stand astonish'd at his patience, and bless him for it.* If you should have defil'd your Neighbors bed, or sullied his reputation, or rifled his Goods, would he have withheld his vengeance, unless he had been too weak to execute it? We have done worse to God, then we can do to man, and yet he draws not that Sword of Wrath out of the scabbard of his *patience*, to sheath it in our hearts. 'Tis not so much a wonder, that any Judgments are sent, as that there are no more and sharper. That the World shall be fired at last, is not a thing so strange, as that fire doth not come down every day upon some part of it. Had the disciples, that saw such excellent patterns of mildness from their Master, and were so often urg'd to learn of him, that was lowly, and meek, the Government of the World, it had been long since turn'd into ashes, since they were too forward to desire him, to open his magazine of judgments, and kindle a fire, to consume a *Samaritan* Village, for a slight affront in comparison of what he received from others, and afterwards from themselves in their forsaking of him. *Luke 9. 52, 53, 54.* We should admire, and praise that here, which shall be prais'd in Heaven; though *patience* shall cease as to its exercise after the consummation of the World, it shall not cease from receiving the acknowledgments, of what it did, when it traversed the stage of this Earth. If the *Name* of God be glorified, and acknowledged in Heaven, no question but this will also; since *long-suffering* is one of his Divine Titles, a letter in his name, as well as *Merciful, and Gracious, Abundant in Goodness and Truth.* And there is good reason, to think that the *patience* exercised towards some, before converting grace was ordered to seize upon them, will bear a great part in the *Anthems* of Heaven. The greater his *long-suffering* hath been to men, that lay covered with their own dung, a long time before they were freed by grace from their filth; the more admiringly, and loudly they will cry up his Mercy to them, after they have past the gulf, and see a deserv'd Hell at a distance from them, and many in that place of torments, who never had the taste of so much *forbearance*. If mercy will be prais'd there, that which began the Alphabet of it, cannot be forgot. If *Paul* speak so highly of it in a damping World, and under the pull-backs of a *body of death*, as he doth. *1 Tim. 1. 16, 17.* *For this cause I obtained mercy; that Christ might shew forth all long-suffering.* Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the Only Wise God, be Honour, and Glory for ever and ever Amen. No doubt, but he will have a higher note for it, when he is surrounded with a heavenly flame, and freed from all remains of dullness, shall it be praised above, and have we no notes for it here below? Admire Christ too, who sued out your reprieve upon the account of his merit. As mercy acts not upon any but in Christ, so neither had *patience* born with any but in Christ. The pronouncing the *arrest of Judgment* *Gen. 8. 21.* was when God smelt'd a sweet savour from Noahs sacrifice, not from the Beasts offer'd, but the *Antitypical sacrifice* represented.

That we may be rais'd, to bless God for it, let us consider,

1. *The multitude of our provocations.* Though some have blacker guilt than others, and deeper stains, yet let none wipe his mouth, but rather imagine himself to have but little reason to bless it. Are not all our offences as many, as their have been minutes in our lives? All the moments of our continuance in the World, have been moments of his *Patience*, and our ingratitude. *Adam* was punished for one sin, *Moses* excluded *Canaan* for a passionate unbelieving word. *Ananias and Saphira* lost their lives for one sin against the Holy Ghost. One sin sullied the beauty of the World, defaced the works of God, had crackt Heaven and Earth in pieces, had not infinite satisfaction been proposed to the provoked Justice by the Redeemer; And not one sin committed, but is of the same venemous



nemous nature; How *many* of those contradictions against himself hath he born with? Had we been only unprofitable to him, his forbearance of us had been miraculous; But how much doth it exceed a miracle, and lift it self above the meanness of a conjunction with such an Epithet, since we have been provoking? Had there been no more than our impudent or careless rushings into his presence in Worship. Had they been only sins of Omission, and sins of Ignorance, it had been enough to have put a stand to any further operations of this perfection towards us. But add to those, sins of Commission, sins against knowledge, sins against spiritual motions, sins against repeated resolutions, and pressing admonitions, the neglects of all the opportunities of Repentance; put them *all together*, and we can as little recount them, as the sands on the sea shore. But what do I only speak of particular men? view the whole World, and if our own iniquities render it an *amazing* *Patience*; what a mighty supply will be made to it in all the numerous and weighty provocations, under which he hath continued the World for so many revolutions of Years and Ages? Have not all those pressed into his presence with a loud cry, and demanded a sentence from Justice? yet hath not the Judge been overcome by the importunity of our sins? \* Were the Devils punished for *one* sin, a *proud thought*, and that not committed against the blood of Christ, as we have done numberless times? yet hath not God made us partakers in their punishment, though we have exceeded them in the quality of their sin? Oh admirable *patience*! that would bear with me under so *many*, while he would not bear with the sinning Angels for *one*.

\* Pont. part. 1.  
42.

2. Consider how mean things we are, who have provoked him. What is man but a vile thing, that a God abounding with all riches, should take care of so abject a thing, much more to bear so many affronts from such a drop of matter, such a nothing creature! That he that hath anger at his command, as well as pity, should endure such a detestable, deformed creature by sin, to fly in his face. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? *Psal. 8.* *Wise* miserable, incurable man, derived from a word, that signifies to be incurably sick. Man is *Adam*, Earth from his Earthly Original, and *Enosh* incurable from his corruption. Is it not worthy to be admired, that a God of infinite Glory should wait on such *Adams*, worms of earth, and be as it were a servant, and attendant to such *Enoshes*, sickly and peevish creatures?

3. Consider who it is, that is thus patient. He it is that with one breath, could turn Heaven and Earth, and all the inhabitants of both into nothing; That could by one Thunderbolt have razed up the Foundations of a cursed World. He that wants not instruments without to ruine us, that can arm our own Consciences against us, and can drown us in our own Phlegm. And by taking out one pin from our bodies, cause the whole frame to fall asunder. Besides, 'tis a God, that while he suffers the sinner, hates the sin, more than all the Holy men upon Earth, or Angels in Heaven can do; So that his *patience* for a minute transcends the *patience* of all creatures from the Creation to the Dissolution of the World: because it is the *patience* of a God, infinitely more sensible of the cursed quality of sin, and infinitely more detesting it.

4. Consider how long he hath forborn his anger. A reprieve for a Week or a Month is accounted a great favour in Civil States; The Civil Law enacts, \* that if the Emperour commanded a man to be condemned, the Execution was to be deferred 30 dayes: because in that time the Princes anger might be appeased. But how great a favour is it to be reprieved 30 years for many offences, every one of which deserves death more at the hands of God, than any offence can at the hands of man? *Paul* was according to the common account but about 30 years Old at his Conversion, and how much doth he elevate Divine *long suffering*? Certainly there are many, who have more reason, as having larger quantities of *patience* cut out to them, who have lived to see their own gray hairs in a rebellious posture against God, before Grace brought them to a surrender. We were all

\* Cod. Lib. 9.  
Titul. 47 6.  
20.



all condemn'd in the Womb, our Lives were forfeited the first moment of our breath, but *patience* hath stopt the Arrest; The merciful Creditor deserves to have acknowledgment from us, who hath laid by his Bond so many years, without putting it in suit against us. Many of your companions in sin have perhaps been surprized long ago, and haled to an Eternal Prison; Nothing is remaining of them but their dust, and the time is not yet come for your Funeral. Let it be considered, that that God, that would not wait upon the fallen Angels *one instant* after their sin, nor give them a moments space of Repentance, hath prolonged the Life of many a sinner in the World to innumerable moments, to 420000 *minutes* in the space of a Year, to 8 Millions, and 400000 *Minutes* in the space of 20 Years. The damned in Hell would think it a great kindness, to have but a Year's, Month's, nay Day's respite, as a space to Repent in.

5. Consider also, how many have been taken away under shorter measures of *patience*. Some have been struck into a Hell of misery, while thou remainest upon an Earth of *forbearance*. In a Plague, the destroying Angel hath hew'd down others, and past by us; The Arrows have flew about our heads, past over us, and struck in the heart of a neighbour. How many Rich men? How many of our Friends and Familiars have been seiz'd by death, since the beginning of the year, when they least thought of it, and imagin'd it far from them? Have you not known some of your acquaintance snatcht away in the height of a crime? Was not the same wrath due to you as well as to them? And had it not been as dreadful for you to be so surprized by him, as it was for them? Why should he take a *less sturdy sinner* out of thy company, and let thee remain still upon the Earth? If God had dealt so with you, how had you been cut off, not only from the enjoyment of this Life, but the hopes of a better? And if God hath made such a Providence beneficial for reclaiming you, how much reason have you to acknowledge him? He that hath had least *patience*, hath cause to admire, but those that have more, ought to exceed others in blessing him for it. If God had put an end to your natural Life, before you had made provision for Eternal, how deplorable would your condition have been?

Consider also, who ever have been sinners formerly of a deeper note; Might not God have struck a man in the embraces of his Harlots, and choaked him in the moment of his excessive and intemperate healths, or on the sudden have spurted Fire and Brimstone into a blasphemers mouth? What if God had snatcht you away, when you had been sleeping in some great iniquity, or sent you, while burning in lust, to the fire it merited? Might he not have crackt the string, that linkt your souls to your bodies, in the last sickness you had? And what then had become of you? What could have been expected to succeed your impenitent state in this World, but howlings in another? But he repriev'd you upon your petitions, or the solicitations of your friends; and have you not broke your word with him? Have your hearts been stedfast, hath he not yet waited, expecting when you would put your vows and resolutions into Execution? What need had he to cry out to any so loud and so long, Oh you fools, *how long will you love foolishness?* *Prov. 1. 22.* when he might have ceased his crying to you, and have by your death prevented your many neglects of him? Did he do all this, that any of us might add new sins to our old, or rather, that we should bless him for his *forbearance*, comply with the end of it, in reforming our lives, and having recourse to his mercy?

2. Exhortation, therefore presume not upon his *patience*. The exercise of it is not Eternal; you are at present under his *Patience*, yet while you are unconverted, you are also under his anger; *Psal. 7. 11. God is angry with the wicked every day.* You know not how soon his Anger may turn his *Patience* aside, and step before it. It may be his Sword is drawn out of his Scabbard, his Arrows may be settled in his Bow; and perhaps there is but a little time, before you may feel the edge of the one, or the point of the other; and then there will be no

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more



more time for *Patience* in God to us, or petition from us to him. If we repent here, he will pardon us. If we deferre Repentance, and dye without it, he will have no longer mercy to pardon, nor *Patience* to bear.

What is there in our power but the present? the future time we cannot command, the past time we cannot recal, squander not then the present away. The time will come, when *time shall be no more*, and then *long-suffering* shall be no more. Will you neglect the time, wherein *patience* acts, and vainly hope for a time beyond the resolves of *patience*? Will you spend that in vain, which Goodness hath allotted you for other purposes? What an estimate will you make of a little forbearance to respite death, when you are gasping under the stroke of its Arrows? How much would you value some few days, of those many years you now trifle away? Can any think God will be always at an expence with them in vain, that he will have such riches trampled under their feet, and so many editions of his patience, be made waste Paper? Do you know how few sands are yet to run in your glass? Are you sure that he that waits to day, will wait as well to morrow? How can you tell, but that God that is *slow to anger* to day, may be *swift* to it the next? *Jerusalem* had but a day of peace, and the most careful manner hath no more. When their day was done they were destroyed by Famine, Pestilence, or Sword, or led into a doleful Captivity. Did God make our lives so uncertain, and the duration of his forbearance unknown to us, that we should live in a lazy neglect of his Glory, and our own happiness? If you should have more *patience* in regard of your lives, do you know whither you shall have the effectual offers of Grace? As your lives depend upon his will, so your conversion depends solely upon his Grace. There have been many examples of those miserable wretches, that have been left to a reprobate sence, after they have a long time abus'd Divine forbearance. *Thou hast provoked me to anger, saith the Lord, he breeds up sin.* Hos. 13. 12 *The sin of Ephraim is bound up, as bonds are bound up by a Creditor till a fit opportunity; when God comes to put the bond in suit, it will be too late, to wish for that patience we have so scornfully despised.* Consider therefore the end of *Patience*. The *Patience of God* considered in it self, without that which it tends to, affords very little Comfort, 'tis but a step to pardoning Mercy, and it may be without it, and often is. Many have been reprieved, that were never forgiven; Hell is full of those, that had *Patience* as well as we, but not one that accepted pardoning grace, went within the gates of it. *Patience* leaves men, when their sins have ripen'd them for Hell; but pardoning Grace never leaves men, till it hath conducted them to Heaven. His *Patience* speaks him placable, but doth not assure us, that he is actually appeas'd. Men may hope that *long-suffering* tends to a pardon, but cannot be assured of a pardon, but by something else above meer *long-suffering*. Rest not then upon bare *Patience*, but consider the end of it; 'tis not, that any should sin more freely, but repent more meltingly; 'tis not to spirit rebellion, but give a merciful stop to it. Why should any be so ambitious of their ruine, as to constrain God, to ruine them against the inclinations of his sweet disposition?

4. *The fourth Exhortation is, let us imitate Gods patience in our own to others.* He is unlike God, that is hurried with an unruly impetus, to punish others for wronging him. The consideration of Divine *Patience* should make us square our selves according to that pattern. God hath exercised a *long-suffering* from the fall of *Adam* to this minute on innumerable subjects, and shall we be transported with desire of revenge upon a single injury? If God were not *slow to wrath*, a sinful World had been long ago torn up from the foundation. And if revenge should be exercised by all men against their Enemies, what man should have been alive, since there is not a man without an Enemy? If every man were like *Saul*, breathing out threatnings, the World would not only be an *Aceldama*, but a Desert. How distant are they from the nature of God, who are in a flame upon every slight provocation from a sence of some feeble and imaginary honour, that must bloody their Sword for a trifle, and write their revenge in wounds and death?



death? When God hath his Glory every day bespattered, yet he keeps his Sword in his sheath; what a wo would it be to the World, if he drew it upon every affront? This is to be like Brutes, Dogs, or Tygers, that snarle, bite, and devour upon every slight occasion: But to be *Patient*, is to be divine, and to shew our selves acquainted with the disposition of God. *Be you therefore perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect. Matth. 5. 48. i. e.* Be you perfect, and good; for he had been exhorting them, to bless them, that curs'd them, and to do good to them that hated them, and that from the example God had set them, in causing his Sun to rise upon the evil as well as the good. *Be you therefore perfect.* To Conclude, as *Patience* is Gods perfection, so it is the accomplishment of the Soul. And as his *slowness to anger* argues the greatness of his power over himself, so an unwillingness to revenge, is a sign of a power over our selves, which is more noble than to be a Monarch over others.

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A  
TABLE  
OF THE  
Places of Scripture  
Explained in this  
BOOK.

*Some few of the Numbers being twice gone over, the Reader may observe that this Mark †, where 'tis set after the Figures in this Table, and the following Index, directs him to the first of those Folio's; and where he finds no Mark at all, he is to consult the second.*

| GENESIS.  |         |             | EXOD.     |         |         |
|-----------|---------|-------------|-----------|---------|---------|
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| 1.        | 1.      | 346,439,440 | 3.        | 11.     | 328     |
|           | 26.     | 443         |           | 14.     | 187,188 |
| 2.        | 7.      | 30,608      | 4.        | 24.     | 801     |
|           | 17.     | 796         | 6.        | 3.      | 439,440 |
| 3.        | 8.      | 803         | 9.        | 16.     | 454     |
|           | 15.     | 457         | 15.       | 11.     | 494     |
| 4.        | 26.     | 140,801     | 32.       | 10.     | 602     |
| 6.        | 6.      | 225         | 33.       | 19.     | 585     |
| 18.       | 19.     | 287         | 34.       | 9.      | 806     |
| 22.       | 12.     | ibid.       |           | NUMB.   |         |
| 32.       | 30.     | 116         |           |         |         |
| 46.       | 4.      | 657,658     |           |         |         |
| 47.       | 31.     | 141         | 34.       | 10.     | 116     |
|           |         |             | Ppppp     |         | DEUT.   |



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| 32.  | 33,34.    | 300             | 69.       | 19.                 | 328         |
| 34.  | 10.       | 116             | 74.       | 14.                 | 407         |
|  |           |                 | 76.       | 12.                 | 771         |
|  |           |                 | 78.       | 36.                 | 327         |
|  |           |                 |           | 38.                 | 804         |
|  | I KINGS.  |                 | 90.       | 1.                  | 179,180     |
| 8.   | 27.       | 250             |           | 2.                  | 180,181     |
|  | 39.       | 316             |           | 8.                  | 318         |
|  | II KINGS. |                 | 102.      | 25,26,27.           | 203,4,5,6,7 |
|  |           |                 |           | from v. 3 to v. 28. | 229,230     |
| 10.  | 9.        | 64              | 103.      | 3.                  | 699         |
| 20.  | 1,4,5.    | 226,227         |           | 14.                 | 333 +       |
|  | II CHRON. |                 |           | 19.                 | 700,701,702 |
| 14.  | 15.       | 68              | 104.      | 2.                  | 15          |
|  | JOB.      |                 |           | 31.                 | 206,207     |
|  |           |                 | 105.      | 25.                 | 534         |
| 4.   | 18.       | 500             | 106.      | 19,20.              | 122         |
| 9.   | 21.       | 320             | 111.      | 10.                 | 14          |
| 12.  | 18.       | 742,743         | 113.      | 5.                  | 257         |
| 14.  | 5.        | 293             | 130.      | 4.                  | 130         |
|  | 17.       | 282             | 139.      | 2.                  | 300         |
| 16.  | 19.       | 331             |           | 7,8,9.              | 247,248     |
| 22.  | 14.       | 718             |           | 15,16.              | 30          |
| 24.  | 12.       | 792             |           | 16.                 | 293         |
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| 31.  | 26,27,28. | 88              | 145.      | 17.                 | 584         |
| 34.  | 21.       | 285             | 147.      | 1,2,3.              | 272,273     |
| 38.  | 7.        | 615             |           | 4.                  | 273,717,718 |
|  |           |                 |           | 5.                  | 273,274     |
| PSAL.  |           |                 | Chapters, | Verfes,             | Pages,      |
| Psalms,  | Verfes,   | Pages,          | 8.        | 12.                 | 346         |
| 1.   | 4.        | 233             |           | 22.                 | 192,749     |
| 2.   | 4.        | 257             |           | 30.                 | 343         |
| 8.   | 4.        | 824             | 9.        | 10.                 | 14          |
| 10.  | 11,13.    | 1               | 15.       | 11.                 | 285         |
| 14.  | 1.        | 1,2             | 16.       | 4.                  | 528         |
| 16.  | 2.        | 749             |           | ECCL.               |             |
| 19.  | 1,2,3,4.  | 809             | 8.        | 11.                 | 48          |
|  | 4.        | 348             |           | ISAI.               |             |
|  | 9.        | 510             | 1.        | 10,11,14.           | 137         |
|  | 12.       | 288             | 4.        | 2.                  | 457         |
| 22.  | 2,3,4.    | 558             | 9.        | 6.                  | 315         |
| 26.  | 8.        | 257             | 29.       | 15.                 | 328         |
| 27.  | 4.        | 497             | 34.       | 4.                  | 205         |
|  | 10.       | 267             | 38.       | 1,5.                | 226,227     |
| 29.  | 10.       | 726             | 40.       | 15,17.              | 252         |
| 32.  | 1,2.      | 326             | 41.       | 21,22.              | 190,291     |
| 50.  | 21.       | 792,794         | 43.       | 20,21.              | 66          |
|  | 23.       | 326             | 45.       | 5.                  | 743         |
| 51.  | 4.        | 303             |           | 11.                 | 769         |
|  | 6.        | 384             | 48.       | 10.                 | 657         |
| 58.  | 3.        | 48              | 52.       | 4,5.                | 658         |
|  | 4.        | 49              | 54.       | 16.                 | 346         |
|  | 10.       | 603             | 66.       | 1.                  | 251         |
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|-----------------------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Chapters,             | Verfes, | Pages,      | Chapters, | Verfes,                 | Pages,          |
| 6.                    | 21.     | 534         | 1.        | 1,2.                    | 787,788         |
| 7.                    | 21.     | 137         | 3.        |                         | 788,789,790,791 |
| 12.                   | 9.      | 233         |           | HABAK.                  |                 |
| 15.                   | 15.     | 789         | 1.        | 16.                     | 86              |
| 16.                   | 17.     | 287         |           | ZEPH.                   |                 |
| 21.                   | 35,36.  | 205         | 2.        | 1,2.                    | 800             |
| 23. from v. 16 to 24. |         | 241,2,3     |           | ZECH.                   |                 |
| 32.                   | 31.     | 799         | 6.        | 1.                      | 254             |
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| 3.                    | 33.     | 803         | 14.       | 16.                     | 149             |
|                       | EZEK.   |             |           | MAL.                    |                 |
| 4.                    | 6.      | 802         | 1.        | 13,14.                  | 64              |
| 8.                    | 2.      | 497         | 3.        | 5.                      | 319             |
| 9.                    | 10.     | 803         |           | 6.                      | 806             |
| 11.                   | 16.     | 657         |           | MATT.                   |                 |
| 18.                   | 25.     | 790         | 1.        | 18.                     | 457             |
| 20.                   | 33.     | 771         | 3.        | 9.                      | 423             |
|                       | DAN.    |             | 5.        | 48.                     | 792,827         |
| 7.                    | 9.      | 124         | 7.        | 11.                     | 551             |
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| 1.                    | 5.      | 816         | 15.       | 6.                      | 62              |
| 2.                    | 2,3.    | 804,814     | 18.       | 10.                     | 278             |
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|                       | 19.     | 769         |           | MARK.                   |                 |
| 5.                    | 5.      | 513         | 10.       | 18.                     | 577,578,579     |
|                       | 12.     | 804         |           | LUKE.                   |                 |
| 6.                    | 4.      | 803,804     | 1.        | 35.                     | 456             |
|                       | 7.      | 752         | 10.       | 20.                     | 235             |
| 7.                    | 3.      | 69          |           | JOHN.                   |                 |
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| 8.                    | 12.     | 55          | 4.        | 10 ad 24.               | 109,110         |
| 10.                   | 15.     | 122         |           | 24. 110,111,112,129,130 |                 |
| 11.                   | 10.     | 150,151     | 5.        | 19.                     | 472             |
|                       | 8.      | 804         | 6.        | 64.                     | 317             |
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| 3.                    | 4,10.   | 226,227     | 17.       | 18.                     | 461             |
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| 5.                    | 2.      | 192         |           | 30.                     | 799             |
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| 8.   | 4.                   | 384                   |           | TITUS.     |             |
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|      | 22.                  | 795,814               | 1.        | 9.         | 514         |
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